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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 175

THURSDAY JULY 23, 2009

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
What's your level of
confidence in CHC's
ability to meet your
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PANDEMIC ALERT STATUS

6

As of July 22, 2009

Phase 1: Viruses circulating among animals have yet to cause infections in humans.

Phase 2: An animal influenza virus is causing infection in humans, and is considered a potential pandemic threat.

Phase 3: An animal or human-animal influenza virus has caused sporadic cases or small clusters of disease in people, but has not resulted in human-to-human transmission sufficient to sustain community-level outbreaks.

Phase 4: Verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human-animal influenza virus able to cause "community-level outbreaks."

Phase 5: A strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of planned mitigation measures is short.

Phase 6: The pandemic phase, is an indication that a global pandemic is underway.

For more information about the H1N1 flu, contact DPH at 236-8797, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm, 234-8950 during after hours, e-mail cnnmipheoc@gmail.com, or visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

Source: CNMI Department of Public Health, World Health Organization

INSIDE

Extinct Raptor

The Senate voted Tuesday to halt production of the Air Force's missile-eluding F-22 Raptor fighter jets in a high-stakes showdown over President Barack Obama's efforts to shift defense spending to a new generation of smaller F-35 Joint Strike Fighters.

Nation...Page 15



Status of Immigration staff still in limbo. **PAGE 3**
Over 2,700 persons under probation in CNMI. **PAGE 4**

50-50 premium rate for health insurance okayed

NMIRF modifies premium contribution rates

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fund supports establishment of Workers' Compensation Fund

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund has ex-

pressed support to a bill that seeks to establish a Workers' Compensation Fund.

Fund Administrator Mark A. Aguon informed House Ways and Means

Committee chair Rep. Ray N. Yumul that such legislation "is wholeheartedly supported."

See FUND on Page 4



NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

A boy looks at the big screen that shows the reflected image of the solar eclipse that attracted an appreciative crowd at the Palms Resort Saipan yesterday. *See photo gallery on Page 7*

Skies clear up for solar eclipse on Saipan

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Clear blue skies treated solar eclipse

watchers to a more vivid look at the phenomenon on Saipan yesterday.

Residents saw the crescent shape of the sun either through a pinhole or

the shadows of leaves under the trees. Other people used welder's masks to witness the eclipse.

See SKIES on Page 4

Island-wide blackouts hit Rota the past few days

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Island-wide blackouts hit Rota the past few days, raising fear that the island's power plant may also end up in the same emergency condition that



See ROTA on Page 4



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TEENS IN MOTION

The CNMI Youth Congress is inviting all YOUTH between the ages of 14 – 20 to its 7th Annual Youth Summit on July 31, 2009 at the Multi Purpose Center.

AGENDA:

Registration: 7:30 – 8:00 am

Morning Session: 8:00 – 12:00pm

Topics: Substance Abuse
Teen Pregnancy, HIV/STDS/AIDS
Healthy Eating Habits
CHALLENGE MASTERS

Morning Session is limited to the FIRST 150 REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS.

Afternoon Session: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Gubernatorial Candidates Forum

ARTICLE XII Presentation

Youth Congress Presentation

Afternoon Session is OPEN to ALL YOUTH

Registration is ongoing at the Office of the CNMI Youth Congress located at the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (Legislature) in Capitol Hill. Office hours are Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 664-8845 or email to youthcongress@cnmileg.gov.mp.

Join US Tackle Youth Issues and work towards RESOLVING the Issues TOGETHER as ONE YOUTH, ONE HEART, and ONE COMMUNITY.

RISE UP! SPEAK OUT! ACT to resolve our CHALLENGES!

Local

Fund investment drawdown now \$35.8M

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Since the beginning of fiscal year 2009, the NMI Retirement Fund has withdrawn \$35.8 million from its investment portfolio, according to comptroller David Demapan.

In a report to the board, Demapan disclosed that to date, Fund assets and portfolio stand at \$307.7 million which indicated that significant amount was lost to the Fund because of the drawdown it made during the last years.

Saipan Tribune learned that the board authorized a drawdown of \$45 million in FY2009. Demapan said that just nine months to end the fiscal year, withdrawal incurred from the investment reached \$35.8 million.

Records showed the following drawdown since the beginning of fiscal year: October 2008, \$4.9 million; November 2008, \$3.7 million; December 2008, \$4.4 million; January 2009, \$4.1 million; February 2009, \$3.6 million; March 2009, \$4.4 million; April 2009, \$1.9 million; May 2009, \$2.8 million; and June 2009, \$4 million.

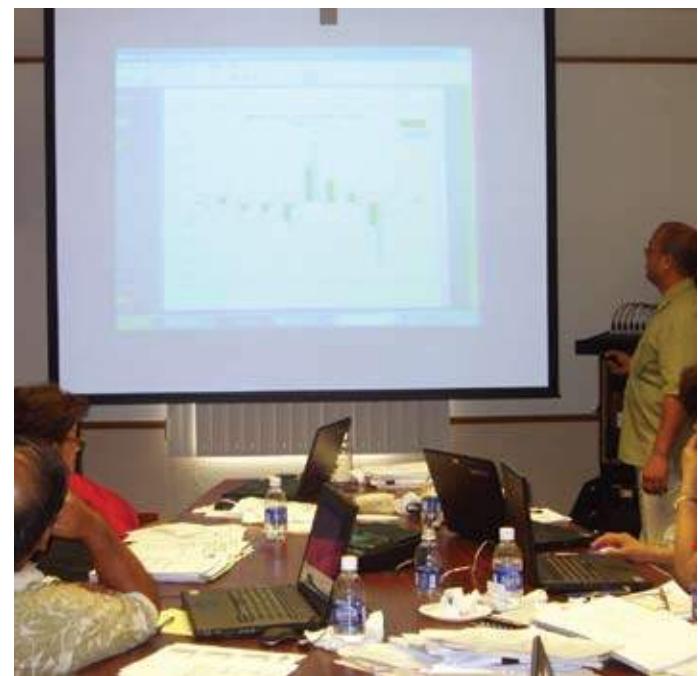
Demapan reported that since the program's inception, \$128.6 million have been withdrawn from the investment fund.

However, the comptroller noted that in FY2008, the Fund recorded a \$36.6-million drawdown in 12 months.

Board chairman Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero yesterday told *Saipan Tribune* that an average of \$3.5 million to \$4 million is being withdrawn every month as a result of lack of funds to pay for the member's pension benefits.

Just recently, the court ruled in favor of the Fund, ordering the central government to pay its employer's contribution totaling to \$231.6 million.

However, Guerrero said as to date no clear guidance has been



MONETH G. DEPOSA
NMI Retirement Fund board trustees listen to a presentation during yesterday's meeting at Capitol Hill.

set as to the settlement payment.

It was on July 7 when the board appointed members of the negotiating team which has yet to receive a positive response from both the Fitial administration and the Legislature on its request to meet and start negotiations.

It was decided in yesterday's meeting that a follow-up letter will be turned in to both parties.

Guerrero said the \$231.6 million "obligation" of the government would bring an impact to the Fund.

It was disclosed that in the last 10 years, no money came into the Fund's investment.

"If the government will not pay...it basically will create the death of the Fund because we need new money to come in so we can stop withdrawing from our investment," he said.

Only up to 7 years lifeline

The Fund's comptroller yesterday disclosed that based on the latest investment data and

records, he's giving only seven years on the Fund's lifeline.

"If market condition will continue to show positive turn, we can hope for seven more years of the Fund's life. But because there are extraordinary events that may come in, we're also expecting a shorter term of maybe only three years...," he told the board.

Every year, the Fund paid out \$5 to \$7 million in pension benefits to members and other obligations.

Last month, the board reported that the Fund has already incurred a huge investment loss of \$86.6 million from October 2008 to May 31 this year.

A big bulk of these losses has been caused by the global financial crisis that affecting the various international investment portfolio and assets of the fund.

However, the board expressed optimism that the market for the CNMI will rebound in the following months as shown by the positive indications in investment trend analysis.

Autonomous agencies have \$20.3M in unpaid contribution

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Unpaid employer contributions from independent and autonomous government agencies now stand at \$20.3 million, according to the latest data from the NMI Retirement Fund.

Comptroller David Demapan yesterday disclosed to the board that the figure is cumulative and exclude interest penalties for each agency.

The autonomous agencies unpaid employer contributions have grown by 32 percent—or \$4.9 million—from \$15.3 million in FY 2008 to \$20.3 million to date—three months before the end of the fiscal year.

Demapan said all payments are applied first to interest penalty before applying to the principal.

As of June 30, 2009, the balance of the receivables of autonomous agencies is \$21.3 million which comprised of \$20.3 million principal plus prior years interest penalty of \$1 million for FY 2009.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Public School System is on top of the list, incurring \$11 million in unpaid employer contributions. It is followed by the Northern Marianas College which has outstanding debt of \$4.9 million.

PSS, in numerous occasions, said that currently it has no capability to pay for

the "unfunded" liability of the Retirement Fund because of its meager budget.

The system officials earlier disclosed that the "arrears" are the difference between the 11 percent contribution and the actuarial rate of 36 percent.

The cash-strapped Commonwealth Utilities Corp. comes next with an unpaid employer contribution of \$1.9 million, while the Tinian Municipal Treasury has \$1.5 million owed to the Fund.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, meantime, has so far recorded \$420,754 in unpaid contribution; Marianas Visitors Authority, \$415,598; and the Department of Public Lands, \$101,341.

Status of Immigration staff still in limbo

Only 7 of 61 personnel pass DHS exam

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Immigration Division director Melvin Grey yesterday disclosed that up to this time there is no clear plan for the 54 staffers who will be displaced when federal officials take over in November.

Though he admitted that pro-

posals and recommendations were earlier made for their lateral transfer to other government agencies, this may not seem feasible because of the current state of the government.

Because of the funding shortage, the government is anticipating a reduction in workforce this next fiscal year to keep the

government afloat.

Grey, who expressed worry about the "future" of his personnel, described the situation as "depressing."

In order to help and assist these soon-to-be-affected staffers, Grey said they are allowing them to seek potential job replacement and transfer.

But he admitted the "limited hiring" of companies at present.

Saipan Tribune learned that last January, the Department of Homeland Security conducted a test for immigration employees who may be absorbed when the transition begins in the Commonwealth.

However, Grey admitted that there are some 38 people who tried of which only 14 of them were certified as eligible to take

the DHS examination.

Others, he believed, did not pass the initial requirements such as age limit and educational background.

The director added that of the 14, only seven successfully passed the test and up to this time awaiting notice on the next steps of the hiring process of the federal agency.

"Seven employees passed ... and still waiting for the next steps to take," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Like other employees in his division, Grey admitted that even himself is unsure of where he may be placed next.

"I don't know," he admitted.

Asked on the preparation of his division to the federal take-over, Grey said he has no direct information as to when the DHS will formally assume the office operation or when their work

will be turned over.

He said he will wait until a notice is sent by the higher authorities.

If funding permits...

The administration's press secretary, Charles Reyes Jr., yesterday said that the governor is willing to work with the Legislature to address the specific concerns of the immigration employees who will be affected by the federal take-over in November.

However, he admitted that funding remains a problem to carry out this goal.

"That is something that still has to be worked out with the Legislature. The administration alone cannot unilaterally take action to transfer those employees to other government agencies without legislative approval or without the identification of funds for govern-

ment positions for local immigration workers displaced under federalization," Reyes said.

It can be recalled that the Legislature passed a budget through a legislative override of a budget veto, and this budget placed hiring restrictions on the executive branch, which is also struggling with reduced financial resources.

Reyes said these restrictions may still be in effect.

However, he said if qualified and if funding is available the displaced workers may find other employment within the local government.

"They may find employment with the federal government. Or they may find employment within the private sector. We would like to see these workers gainfully employed in the CNMI in the local government, federal government, or private sector. The governor is willing to work with the Legislature to address this issue," he added.

HANMI: Occupancy rate drops 11 percent in June

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported 47 percent occupancy among its 13 member hotels for June 2009, an 11-percent decrease from June 2008.

HANMI said 38,701 of 82,500 available room nights sold in June, compared to 49,728 of 85,170 of available room nights sold over the same period last year. Room rates dipped slightly from \$92.18 last year to \$87.05 in June 2009.

"Bookings from Japan and Korea continue to be negatively influenced by H1N1 flu," said HANMI vice chair Nick Nishikawa. "In addition, there were fewer air seats from China in June 2009 due to suspension of flights. This



HOTEL ASSOCIATION NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

again points to the fragile nature of tourism in the Northern Marianas."

HANMI also noted that the decline in the Russian market was due in part to both the country's economic downturn and the presumption that im-

migration would be federalized on June 1, requiring Russians to obtain a U.S. visa to visit the Northern Marianas (federalization has been moved to Nov. 28, 2009).

So far this year, hotel occupancy is at an average 62 percent, compared to 64 percent over the same period last year.

HANMI was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the CNMI. (PR)

REWARD OFFERED \$500.00

Apartment D-4 at Millers Estates in Capitol Hill was robbed at about 6:00 A.M. on July 19, 2009. Items taken:

- Toshiba Satellite Laptop Computer
- Citizen Eco-Drive Watch w/ Titanium Band
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- Black Workbag containing check books
- Green Workbag w/ initials BMM

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PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

CNMI Governor Benigno R. Fitial, on June 30, 2009, approved and issued *Qualifying Certificate No. QC 2009-01* for *PTI Services, Inc.* ("the Beneficiary").

Address. The address of the Beneficiary is *Susupe*, municipality of *Saipan*, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands 96950.

Investment. The Beneficiary will invest approximately \$3.2 million to expand and operate its call center located at *Susupe*, municipality of *Saipan*, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands 96950.

For more detailed information, please contact CDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its offices in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

Pursuant to Qualifying Certificate Rules and Regulations, this ad is paid by the Applicant

Over 2,700 persons under probation in CNMI

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Latest data showed a total of 2,717 persons in the CNMI are currently under probation for the period of Jan. 1 to July 16, 2009 with four active warrants on Saipan.

This figure is close to the 2,978 ac-

tive persons on probation in 2008. These are persons convicted and released from prison but are still under court supervision.

Data are displayed at the Supreme Court atrium where an exhibit about the community supervision professionals is ongoing and part of the celebration.

saw a solar eclipse but not in this perfect setting.

"It's unbelievable. There was no cloud. It's the perfect day we hoped for. The crowd here are excited," Moody said.

People started coming to the hotel as early as 9:30am but the eclipse started at around 11:30pm with a tiny little nibble on the Sun.

The total eclipse was seen between 70-75 percent in all 14 islands of the Northern Marianas, including Tinian and Rota.

Moody said this was the first time he witnessed a solar eclipse this clear.

He said first time he witnessed a solar eclipse was about 40 years ago and the second was 21 years ago—both in Utah, where it was usually cloudy.

The total eclipse was 100 percent in Iwo Jima, Japan, some parts of China, and India.

"It's just amazing," he said. Marian Aldan-Pierce of DFS said

Most of the persons on probation are on Saipan with a total of 2,557, while Tinian has 90 and Rota 69.

Probation Office collected a total of \$72,175 in assessment fines during the first six and a half months of the year.

This brings a total of \$1,699,678.46 to include the balance in fines and assessment fees in 2008.

she's glad for this rare chance to view the solar eclipse. Her sentiments were shared by many people on the island.

She said she even brought her granddaughter, Jezza Guerrero, to let her experience the solar eclipse.

Aldan-Pierce said that the crescent shape of the sun was in itself pretty awesome.

"They never gonna see it again in their entire life," she said.

Scientists theorize that this won't happen again until the next 132 years.

The 12-year-old Guerrero, said that she hopes to see it again if ever she is still alive by that time.

Her cousin Lance Yamada said that what he saw was indescribable and totally amazing.

A Japanese tourist, Eiji Koide, and his girlfriend came to Saipan instead of Shanghai because he was sure that the weather here would be clear.

He said he was not disappointed be-

cause he saw an excellent view of the eclipse.

Businessman Paul Zak said it was a beautiful way to experience the sun in the sky.

"The telescopes are a great deal to have and see the corona," he said.

Zak said he noticed a significant drop in temperature.

"The temperature dropped so fast. It was so nice," he said.

Maersk Line Shipping's Rob Engelhardt said it was historic in the sense that you cannot see this very often.

He said that the last time he saw a solar eclipse was as a 12-year-old Boy Scout in 1962 in his native Minnesota.

He's now 59 and this was the first time he saw it again and he's glad that the weather was clear.

Engelhardt said the most amazing thing that happened was the quick change of temperature from humid to cool.

"It dropped to 10 degrees in 15 min-

utes," he said.

Engelhardt said that once in a while he sees a lunar eclipse while at sea, but what he witnessed yesterday was very different.

Kaori Itzuka, team member of the stargazing program, said Japan may have 100 percent total eclipse but she said the weather is better on Saipan.

"We have a perfect weather. We like it so much," she said.

Russel Snow, president of United Micronesia Development Association, which owns the hotel, said hosting the solar eclipse viewing was how Palms Resort plans to serve the community.

"What we have seen today is a wonderful educational experience and a way to do something with your wife and friends," he said.

The hotel invited Moody for the special event. He is also here to conduct presentations on astronomy the next two Fridays starting 9pm.

of Rota may fall under the same emergency conditions that CUC is currently experiencing," he told Muna.

The senator said Rota has only two generator units that are operable and both are required during peak hours.

"Therefore, technically, Rota does not have any reserve power generation capacity. If one, or both, of these generators were to go down indefinitely, the consequences could be great," Manglona said.

He asked Muna to inform the Senate committee of CUC's immediate and long term plans in solving the critical power generation challenges that Rota is facing.

ously injured government employees incurring exorbitant medical bills and other workers' compensation benefits.

"Such government employees workers' compensation benefits must be paid by government appropriation to prevent the Workers' Compensation Commission from becoming insolvent," he said.

All Commonwealth agencies, Hocog said, must pay one half percent of their operating budget to the Workers' Compensation Fund to cover all present and future workers' compensation claims of government employees.

ernment shall pay no subsidized premium to any carrier not competitively selected as the exclusive carrier for the government plan.

Saipan Tribune learned the following are current rates collected from both government and employees' share: single subscriber pays \$117.90 vs. government contribution of \$52; couple subscribers pay \$243.82 in monthly premium, while the government contribution amounts to \$104.50; for family subscribers, premium set monthly is \$380.59 against the government share of \$163.12.

The Fund said the enrollees' premium rates may vary from time to time.

SKIES

From Page 1

As earlier predicted, the sun's partial eclipse came at around 11:45pm and it lasted for about six minutes.

A banana-shape like image was seen by a throng of witnesses at the Palms Resort Saipan where giant telescopes were set-up by the hotel to give the local community the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The image was reflected into a big screen but the watchers preferred to view it from the telescopes. The hotel also provided eye-protectors for the viewers.

Visiting scientist J. Ward Moody, however, told them not to direct it to the sun for too long because it might burn their eyes.

Moody, who is a physics and astronomy professor from Brigham Young University, said it was the third time he

ROTA

From Page 1

the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. on Saipan is currently experiencing.

In an interview yesterday, Sen. Paul A. Manglona, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, disclosed that right now Rota is in critical stage with the power generation situation.

Manglona said Rota has been experiencing island-wide blackouts in recent days, including last weekend and most of the day on Tuesday.

"It is not a funding issue because for

more than four years we have made available 702 funding for power generation repair and maintenance as well as spare parts," he said.

The Rota senator said they understand that the emergency declaration at CUC on Saipan is also critical and that CUC personnel devote a lot of their time to resolving the power generation problem here.

Manglona, however, noted that each time they had a meeting in the last two years they had been saying all along to look into the Rota situation because it's going to be critical one day.

He said the island may end up being in declaration of state of emergency

pension Fund.

Aguon recommended the following change under the Authorization for Funding by Commonwealth agencies:

■ The Secretary of Finance shall withhold one half percent of all locally generated funds appropriated by Commonwealth law for all Commonwealth agencies' operations and activities or \$500,000 whichever is the lesser for the Workers Compensation Fund; and

■ The withheld amounts shall be deposited in the Workers' Compensation Fund and, therefore, may be expended

situation just like on Saipan.

The senator said Rota has only two generators working and if one of them conks out, then the island will be having rolling blackouts.

"Because during peak hours we can only afford 1.8 megawatts which actually comes from a 2.5-megawatt generator that has been greatly reduced because of non-overhaul and maintenance of generators. So with that generator down then we don't have anything left but the 1.2 megawatt caterpillar," Manglona said.

He said the Rota power plant needs parts, maintenance, and that contracts have to be signed and overhauling

without further appropriation.

The legislation states that "the Workers' Compensation Commission shall report no later than three months after the closing of each fiscal year to the governor and the legislature in detail on the use of the funds."

Introduced by Rep. Victor B. Hocog and supported by several other lawmakers, House Bill 16-257 proposes to establish a Workers' Compensation Fund by amending the law to authorize funding by Commonwealth agencies for such compensation.

Hocog stated in the bill that there has not been a workers' compensation appropriation to fund the compensation payments made to government workers who are injured on the job since the enactment of Public Law 13024.

Consequently, Hocog said, the Workers' Compensation Commission has utilized the workers' compensation funds paid by private employers to fund such payments of private and government employees, "which is contrary to law."

The lawmaker said there are a few seri-

FUND

From Page 1

"It is appreciated that those who take an active role in the leadership and management of the Commonwealth give the opportunity for comment on this type of proposed legislation," said Aguon in a letter to Yumul sent on Friday.

The Fund administrator only made one recommendation in the wordings to avoid confusion as to the amount to be appropriated to the Workers' Com-

to provide an affordable health insurance plan for the benefit of government employees.

The program, the Fund said, is designed to be self-sufficient and therefore must establish rates sufficient to pay for administration of the program and particularly claims incurred by enrollees in the plan.

During yesterday's deliberation, Fund administrator Mark A. Aguon said the new premium rate would benefit the members and would encourage others to join the health program.

"It is for the benefit of the employees...and in the long run, it will also [be] to the benefit of the government," he told the board, adding that the new

regulation—after publication at the Commonwealth Register—would be applicable to new members.

Saipan Tribune learned that the decision to approve the equal contribution rate of government and employees was a result of the "positive" response from the administration.

Aguon had recently met with Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos and discussed the then-proposed regulation that would alter government subsidization to apply only to government selected carriers.

Representatives from the administration and the Fund are scheduled to meet with both the House Ways and Means committee and the Senate Fiscal Affairs committee to

ask to incorporate the "new rates" to the budget they are formulating for FY 2010.

It was earlier disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that the new rates were a recommendation from the third-party administrator of the program, Aetna Global Benefits, which has yet to collect some \$122,000 runoff claims from the government.

The regulation was an amendment to Article 10 that covers provision about the premium contribution.

Under the board's decision, unless determined by actuarial study and recommendation, the government contribution to premiums shall increase to 50 percent beginning Nov. 1 and the gov-

ernment shall pay no subsidized premium to any carrier not competitively selected as the exclusive carrier for the government plan.

Saipan Tribune learned the following are current rates collected from both government and employees' share: single subscriber pays \$117.90 vs. government contribution of \$52; couple subscribers pay \$243.82 in monthly premium, while the government contribution amounts to \$104.50; for family subscribers, premium set monthly is \$380.59 against the government share of \$163.12.

The Fund said the enrollees' premium rates may vary from time to time.

50-50

From Page 1

tion of the premium contribution rates collected from both government agencies and members.

Under the Fund's existing rules, government is mandated a 70-percent share in the premium of employees while members pay the other 30 percent in the policy.

With the new decision approved during yesterday's meeting, the equal contribution rate of 50-50 percent was unanimously adopted.

The GHJI program is underwritten exclusively by the CNMI government

Lawmaker: Is admin actively seeking nominees to CUC board?

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Senator Paul A. Manglona yesterday raised a question whether the administration is actively looking for persons who are qualified to serve as board directors for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

In an interview, Manglona

said it is good news to hear that the administration has expressed intention to follow the law that mandates the establishment of CUC board.

"But I think the question here is are they actively looking for names?" said the senator who chairs the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications.

In October 2008, legislation seeking the creation of a CUC board of directors was enacted into law. Until now, the utility agency has no board of directors.

Press Secretary Charles Reyes Jr. told *Saipan Tribune* on Tuesday that the Fitial administration will establish the CUC board, but only after the lifting of its state of emergency status.

Manglona said the administration claimed in the past that they don't have qualified individuals who are willing to volunteer to serve as CUC board of directors.

"As you know under the new law there are clear provisions there about conflict of interests. There are many restrictions of hiring of immediate

relatives and other concerns that will make one maybe not want to be a board member," Manglona said.

The administration, he said, should actively look for nominees and start coming out of a short list.

"I think that we need to seriously follow the new law and I think it's good for CUC to have



Manglona

Guest worker denied application to transfer files complaint vs. Labor

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

A female guest worker recently filed a complaint in Superior Court for judicial review of the Department of Labor's decision to deny her an application to transfer.

Attorney Stepehn Woodruff, the legal counsel for the plaintiff Emlyn Cortez, cited several grounds for the complaint—the purported order of the Secretary of Labor was not lawfully made or issued; was arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion; contrary to constitutional right, power, privilege or immunity, short of the plaintiff's statutory rights; and not supported by substantial evidence and does not conform with applicable law.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman ordered Cortez and Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas to appear for the status conference to hear the complaint and discuss the proceedings on Aug. 27.

Labor fines employer \$5K, barred from hiring nonresident workers

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After finding multiple violations of local laws, the Labor Department ordered an employer to pay a \$5,000 fine in addition to permanently stopping him from hiring nonresident workers.

In an eight-page decision issued by administrative hearing officer Barry Hirshbein on Tuesday, Ignacio Agbanlog Jr. and co-respondents were found incapable of offering full-time employment and had entered into a "sponsorship" agreement with Rogelio O. Sexon, who later appealed to Labor for help.

Saipan Tribune learned that Sexon filed a complaint, accusing his employer of improper payment of wages. The employee alleged that of the 96 hours he rendered only 57 hours was paid by Agbanlog.

Labor also found that the employee paid Agbanlog \$500 for labor processing fees, medical examination, surety bond, and medical certificates.

Hirshbein said the parties are guilty of numerous violations of labor law and regulation, among the serious ones included improper payment of wages,

She made an appeal with the Labor secretary on Nov. 14, 2008 and on June 11, 2009, the secretary's Order on Appeal was not signed by San Nicolas but by Deputy Secretary Jacinta M. Kaipat.

Woodruff stated in the complaint for judicial review that

the position of deputy secretary of Labor does not exist in Commonwealth law and the function of deciding appeals to the secretary of Labor is non-delegable and as such "not a valid act of the Secretary of Labor."

Woodruff also stated that the supposed appellate review of the

Labor secretary was so cursory that it did not even note that the Sept. 28, 2008 order was signed by Siemer for Cody.

He said the purported order on appeal contains nothing but a summary of the contents of the original administrative order and her appeal letter.

this independent set up once again," he said.

The senator said he is aware that in the past there were public concerns on how the CUC board of directors was micro-managing CUC.

"I think the new law addresses all of that. And I think it will work toward the interest of the CUC and to the public in general if we follow the law," he added.

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Kaipat sets Sept. deadline for bond claims hearings

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat yesterday vowed to complete by September 2009 the hearings on bond claims filed by alien workers who have unpaid Labor awards.

"Our process for dealing with all of these old bonding claims is quite efficient, and we anticipate that the entire task will be completed this fall," said Kaipat in her interim progress report on the implementation of Public Law 15-108 or the new labor reform law that she authored when she was a Representative.

Kaipat said they expect that the bonding companies may appeal adverse decisions on these old bonding claims to the Labor secretary.

"Those appeals will be decided promptly," the deputy secretary said.

She said it is also likely that any adverse decisions by the secretary will be appealed to the Superior Court.

Kaipat said the court has enforcement powers that Labor does not have so they expect that most of the contested cases will be decided in court.

"It was for this reason that the department took the position that contested bonding claims should be resolved in the court in the first instance," she said.

In June last year, Labor encouraged alien workers to collect their administrative awards by filing small claims in the Superior Court.

Labor recently notified those alien workers with administrative awards to come in to the Labor Hearing Office to register their bond claims.

Kaipat earlier admitted that Labor was required to change its practices because of Superior Court associate judge Per-

ry B. Inos's ruling pertaining to bond issue.

Kaipat, however, stated that due to some reasons many foreign workers will still be referred to small claims court as Labor has been doing in the past.

Last March, Inos ruled that Labor has exclusive jurisdiction over alien workers attempting to collect on labor bonds and that the courts do not have the authority to enforce these bonds.

Inos dismissed for lack of jurisdiction the consolidated small claims filed by 11 Chinese workers against two bonding companies.

The issue stems from a Labor advice for alien workers to file small claims in the Superior Court to recover the awards granted them by Labor against their employers.

Inos noted that the primary reason the workers are unable to recover the awards granted them by Labor is because La-

bor has thus far not attempted to enforce the insurance companies' obligations under the labor bonds.

In her interim report submitted yesterday to the Legislature, Kaipat said after Judge Inos issued the ruling holding that Labor must adjudicate bonding claims, they organized to get this work done.

Labor divided the potential bonding claims in four categories: labor and agency cases decided in 2008; cases collected by the federal ombudsman decided in 2007 and 2006; cases collected by the federal ombudsman decided in 2005 and prior years; and all other cases.

Labor already published notices in the English and Chinese press with respect to cases in the first three groups. Labor is planning to publish the final notice covering all remaining cases by the end of this month.

Kaipat said because of large

scale business closures and failures in 2005-2007, there are a considerable number of bonding claims from cases completed in those years.

"We will not know the total number until our last notice is published and the last date for registering claims (Aug. 20, 2009) has passed," she said.

To conduct hearings on the bond claims, Labor shifted some personnel around temporarily.

Kaipat said former Labor Director Barry Hirshbein went back to his former post as administrative hearing officer to help out with the bonding cases.

Kaipat said they have also put other staff members in the Hear-

ing Office temporarily to help with handling case records and other tasks "so that we can get this work done promptly."

She said the first 183 labor cases decided in 2008 yielded only nine bond claims.

Kaipat said there are few bonding claims arising out of new cases because Labor mediates almost all complaints within 15 days of filing and hearings were done within 90 days of filing.

"Resolving cases promptly means that employers have not become bankrupt or disappeared before the case is resolved, leaving the bonding claim as the only revenue for payment," she added.

Sponsors for Sanpo En Students Exchange Program being sought

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela wishes to announce the arrival of students from Japan under the Sanpo En Students Exchange Program.

The students will be on island from July 28 to Aug. 3, 2009. The students will spend two nights with the homestay sponsors on July 31 and Aug. 1, 2009.

Tudela would like to ask residents of Saipan, most especially those families whose children have participated in the Sanpo En Students Exchange Program

in the past, to open their hearts and welcome the students by bringing them into their home on these two nights.

Anyone who would like to sponsor a student may call the Saipan Mayor's Office at 234-6280 or 234-6208 during normal business hours, Monday to Friday and ask for Tony A. Benavente or you may leave your message.

"Your hospitality will be greatly appreciated," said Tudela. (PR)

ERRATUM

Saipan Tribune mistakenly identified Tim Villagomez's lawyer as Robert Torres in the article "Villagomez family, friends appeal for lenient sentence" that was published last Tuesday, July 21, 2009. The former lieutenant governor's lawyer is David J. Lujan. Our apologies.



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE LOADING BRIDGES
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-004-09

AMENDED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals for Preventive Maintenance of the Loading Bridges at the Saipan International Airport on the Island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The scope of work entails providing preventive maintenance services for four (4) loading bridges. The detailed scope of work will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building on Friday, June 26, 2009. Proposers must submit all required documents listed in the scope of work. All responses to this RFP shall also take into account any and all taxes that will be charged to the proposer awarded the contract for the project, including excise tax.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for the Preventive Maintenance of the Loading Bridges at the Saipan International Airport". One original and four (4) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than **4:30 P.M. LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2009**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a proposal bond issued by a CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Copies of approved surety companies and the bid bond form may be obtained with the scope of work at the office of the Executive Director on **July 22, 2009**.

Contractor will be required to obtain insurance policies based on CPA's requirements. These requirements apply to contracts where the Consultant provides designated professional services to the Authority; i.e. appraisers, architects, equipment maintenance, messengers, construction managers, etc. and the total contract price is less than \$250,000. Copies of the insurance requirements may be obtained with the scope of work at the office of the Executive Director on **July 22, 2009**.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ MR. EFRAIN F. CAMACHO, P.E.
Executive Director/Contracting Officer

Date: July 22, 2009

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Island Snapshots

PHOTOS By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ



Television reporters try the giant telescope set-up by Palms Resort Saipan for a clear viewing of the solar eclipse yesterday.



Brigham Young professor J. Ward Moody is in front of a big screen that shows the reflected image of the solar eclipse that attracted an appreciative crowd at the Palms Resort Saipan yesterday.



A Japanese tourist uses an eye protector to witness the solar eclipse yesterday at the Palms Resort.



An enthusiastic crowd lines up for an opportunity to use a telescope to see a clear view of the solar eclipse.



Two watchers are about to pose for the camera in front of the big screen that projects the solar eclipse yesterday at Palms Resort Saipan.



Saipan residents take turn in using the giant telescope at Palms Resort Saipan yesterday.



A couple uses eye protectors to view the solar eclipse yesterday at Palms Resort Saipan.



An elderly man and a boy share what they've experienced during yesterday's solar eclipse viewing at Palms Resort Saipan.



The crescent shape of the sun is reflected from the telescope to the big screen.

MVA, Okinawan mayors talk tourism

Twelve mayors from Okinawa, Japan visited the Northern Mariana Islands last week to learn more about how this tropical destination attracts Japanese visitors.

Last July 16, Marianas Visitors Authority welcomed the mayors from northern Okinawa to a meeting where the two sides exchanged information on a number of tourists and source areas, flights and air seats, promotions, and other data. The mayors made the trip as part of their effort to learn about tourism and economy situations influencing Okinawa and other resort destinations. The discussions proved to be a two-way street as local visitors authority officials gleaned valuable information from the Okinawan mayors in return.

The Northern Marianas delegation was lead by Japan Consul Tsutomu Higuchi, MVA chairman Jerry Tan, MVA vice chairwoman Marian Aldan-Pierce, and MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. The mayors represented Izena Village, Ieson Village, Oogimi Village,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Visitors Authority Chairman Jerry Tan, third from right, discusses tourism issues with a delegation of mayors from Okinawa who met with MVA officials on July 16, 2009, on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.

Iheya Village, Onna Village, Kunigami Village, Ginoza Village, Kincho Town, Nakiji, Nago City, Motobu Town, and Higashi Village.

"Okinawa receives a huge

number of visitors from mainland Japan each year," said Tenorio. "Our meeting with the mayors was an excellent opportunity to learn from their experience, as well as share some of

our perspectives from here in the Northern Marianas."

The mayors visited Guam last week, where they met with Guam Visitors Bureau and several village mayors. (PR)

DEQ amends wastewater treatment and disposal rules and regs

The Division of Environmental Quality amended its Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Rules & Regulations on June 22, 2009. It was submitted to the Commonwealth Register on March 26 and published in the Commonwealth Register Volume 31, Number 4, on April 27, 2009; pages 029424 to 029447.

The purpose of the amending the regulations is to make needed updates. These updates include percolation testing requirements, certification requirements for percolation testers, certification requirements for wastewater system operators (to enable the CNMI to administer examinations), and raise fees.

Percolation Testers:

Percolation tests shall be required in support for all Individual Wastewater Disposal System (IWDS) and Other Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS):

1. Single family and duplex IWDS application.

2. Multi-residential, commercial, and industrial IWDS applications.

3. Multi-residential, commercial, and industrial OWTS applications where the Applicant

proposes subsurface disposal of the treated wastewater effluent.

Any person performing percolation testing in support of an application stated above must possess a current Soil Percolation Tester (SPT) Certification issued by the division of Environmental Quality (DEQ). All percolation tests must be directly supervised, on-site, by the individual to whom the certification is issued.

To be certified to perform percolation tests and report results, an applicant must pass both a written examination administered by the division and a hands-on test demonstrating the applicant's skills, knowledge, ability and judgment to perform such tests and report the results to designers and/or the division.

Anyone in possession of a verified percolation testing certification issued by the division between July 2007 and the date of publication of this regulation will also be certified upon reapplication.

The fee for initial application is \$50.00. The fee for on-time renewal is \$25.00 (paid on or before the date the certificate expires). The fee for late re-

newal is \$50.00.

Wastewater Operators Examination and Certification:

To assure that wastewater treatment and collection system operators are trained and certified, and that they have knowledge and understanding of the public health reasons for wastewater treatment and disposal standards.

Certification:
No later than March 1, 2010, owners of all Other Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) must place the direct supervision of their OWTS system, including each treatment facility and or collection system, under the responsible charge of the operator holding a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of the treatment facility and/or collection system.

All operating personnel making process control/system integrity decisions about wastewater quality or quantity must be certified. To be certified to operate a OWTS classified for as "Class-I, Class-II, Class-III

For more information, please stop by the Wastewater, Earthmoving & Erosion Control Branch, Division of Environmental Quality in Gualo Rai or you may call 664-8500 or visit our website: www.deq.gov.mp where you can download the amended regulations. (DEQ)

profit, volunteer group that helps collect tips about crimes. The Crime Stoppers then pass the tips on to Department of Public Safety. Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$1,000 for tips that lead to an arrest. NMI Crime Stoppers was helpful to DPS in recent crimes and has paid for numerous tips in 2009. The community of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are very important part in helping DPS solve crimes. (PR)

Earn money and help stop crime on Saipan

Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for tips that lead to arrest

NMI Crime Stoppers is again offering to pay for tips that lead to the arrest of criminals on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. This month NMI Crime Stoppers is pushing for more tips on the growing problem of

copper wire theft.

Any person having any information about all of the previous thefts of copper wire should call the anonymous tip hotline at 234-7272 and give any information they have. You could receive up to \$1,000 if your tip leads to an arrest. The call is completely anonymous and

the person answering will most likely be part of the NMI CS answering service based in Canada (no chance of local ID). The tipster can earn money and help Saipan, Tinian, or Rota. This effort to help stop the copper wire thefts is courtesy of NMI Crime Stoppers and Bridge Capital.

Crime Stoppers is a non-

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 23, 1999

New tax incentives get broad support

Despite questionable provisions, a legislative proposal granting tax exemptions to certain businesses that meet a set of criteria drew wide support from both government and private sectors at a public hearing conducted yesterday by the House Ways and Means Committee. Called the Qualifying Tax Certificate Program, the measure is sponsored by Rep. Heinz S. Hofsneider to assist the business community in dealing with the current economic crisis through a package of incentives it is seeking. But several departments and agencies as well as business organizations called for refinement of the bill, citing several provisions that should be amended to remain consistent with existing laws as well as to adapt to the present economic situation on the island.

DOF admits oversight

There is no money available to earmark \$806,000 for the Saipan Mayor's office and other local concerns, according to Finance Sec. Lucy DLG. Nielsen yesterday, as she admitted an oversight by her department when it gave the go-signal to legislators to tap revenues from poker license fees. "If they want to appropriate money from the \$2,000 (fee), the money is not there," she told in an interview. Saipan lawmakers have voted against recalling an appropriation bill pending before the Office of the Governor, sticking with their resolve that more than \$800,000 in revenues sourced from poker license fees are available for delegation matters.

July 23, 2001

Referral process polished

Plans to ensure that government insurance subscribers can avail of needed medical treatment off-island without being asked to pay up front took a step closer to reality after the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund agreed on Friday to execute such a contract with a Honolulu-based medical referral company. The Fund's Board of Trustees unanimously agreed on a motion to execute the contract that would retain the services of the Hawaii Pacific Medical Referrals Inc., which would facilitate all off-island treatment of Government Group Health and Life Insurance subscribers. In line with this, board chairman Vicente C. Camacho directed Fund administrator Juan S. Torres to have the Fund's legal counsel, Kathleen Troy-Rucker, prepare a draft of the contract that would be ready for signing between Fund officials and the HPMR.

MVA renews plan for Manila-Saipan flights

The Marianas Visitors Authority disclosed plans to negotiate with three major Philippine airline companies for possible direct service between Manila and Saipan. The meeting, which is scheduled to take place this month, is part of MVA's effort to beef up its marketing strategy. The MVA Board of Directors allowed Chair Dave Sablan to fly to Manila on July 27 to negotiate with officials of the Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific and the Air Philippines. The exploratory will be held to determine whether a direct flight from the Philippines to the Northern Marianas will still be possible at this time.

July 23, 2002

Where's federal aid for Rota?

Disaster checks for Guam goes out in the mail. Rota has yet to be declared a disaster area, even as the first checks for federal disaster housing assistance for Guam go out in the mail today. Representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Office were scheduled to arrive on Rota late last week to conduct an assessment of the destruction caused by typhoon Chata'an. There was no confirmation from the Emergency Management Office if the FEMA representatives actually arrived, but EMO director Rudolfo Pua confirmed that federal grants coordinator Vicky Villagomez went to Rota before the weekend last week.

Showdown looms in today's session

House Speaker Heinz S. Hofsneider said he still intends to introduce the measure that aims to increase the user's fee by an additional 1.3 percent during today's session, despite the opposition of some members of the lower chamber. Besides this, however, Hofsneider declined to issue any other public statements about his reported offer to resign from his post, saying everything will be made clear after today's session. OI will still introduce the measure [1.3 percent user fee hike] and then we will see how the chips will fall, O Hofsneider told reporters. The session is scheduled at 8:30am at the House chamber. It is expected that representatives of garment manufacturers, who have expressed their opposition to the tariff hike would attend the session.





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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

ONI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 175

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

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AP The Associated Press

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EDITORIAL

The Afghan front

The scenes and statistics are hauntingly familiar: a videotape of an American soldier held hostage, scared that he won't return to the family he loves; two fighter jets downed this week and four U.S. troops killed by a roadside bomb, making July the deadliest month yet for Western forces in the country; British support flagging as losses mount; and a rise in civilian casualties alienating the very people the troops are there to protect. This sounds an awful lot like President Bush's war in Iraq, but in fact it is President Obama's war in Afghanistan, where the number of foreign troops has nearly doubled this year to 60,000, most of them American.

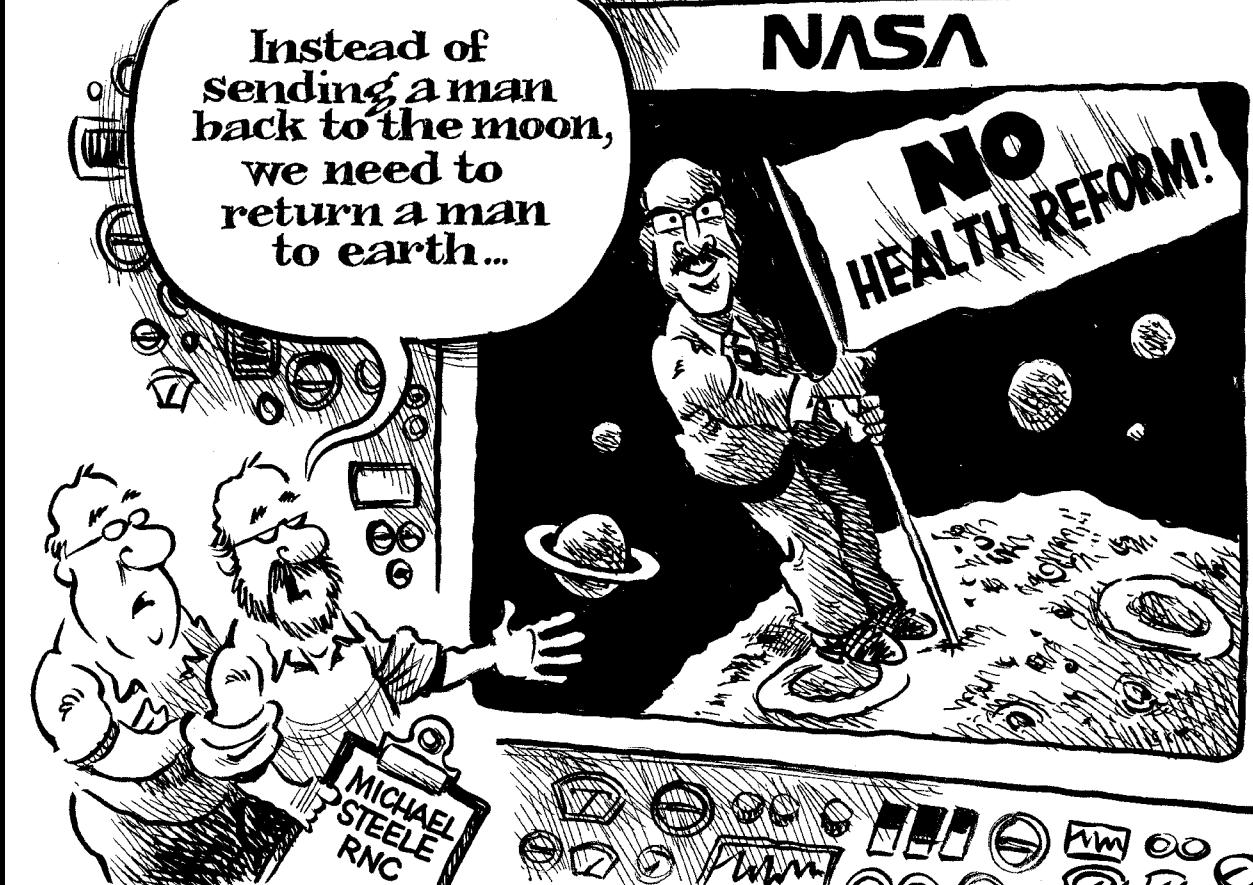
Administration officials are well aware that this sense of *deja vu* doesn't serve the U.S. effort in Afghanistan. After a dubious war in Iraq, Americans are licking their recession wounds and looking inward. Eight years after the 9/11 attacks, Afghanistan suddenly seems far away again. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton sought to remind Americans last week that U.S. troops are in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan "to disrupt, dismantle and ultimately defeat al-Qaida and its extremist allies." The Taliban protects al-Qaida, she said, so "to eliminate al-Qaida, we must also fight the Taliban."

Over the weekend, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told the *Los Angeles Times* that he figured he had about a year to show progress against the Taliban or risk losing public support. He faces an uphill battle for many reasons, the first being that the reach of the United States' ally, President Hamid Karzai, who is up for re-election next month, is unclear beyond the capital of Kabul, and foreign troops operate only in parts of the country. A second reason is that as troop levels and fighting increase, U.S. casualties inevitably will rise. And third, the U.S. will be hard-pressed to demonstrate that al-Qaida is beaten back rather than simply regrouping in remote areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

So how will the public know if U.S. forces are making headway? Through the re-election of Karzai, whose government is widely accused of incompetence and corruption? Through the pacification of a handful of provinces, and, if so, which ones? Obama said he wants to increase development projects to win the support of the Afghan people, but what can we expect to see in a year? What are the goals for the growing Afghan military and police?

The administration is no doubt reluctant to lay down benchmarks for success in a country that has seen the backs of British and Soviet troops before ours. Yet the public needs to know how to measure progress if the administration is to hope for continued public support.

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MARGULIES
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Beyond the Door of No Return

President Barack Obama's recent visit to Ghana was downright biblical.

I don't say this because of the adoring African crowds that treated the American president's visit as if it were the Second Coming. Nor because I believe that our first African-American commander in chief will somehow deliver the continent from the evils that confront it. But the scene of Obama and his family at the site of one of the most notorious slave stations on the Ghanaian coast—ominously called the Door of No Return—reminded me of that singular vision from the Gospels about the last becoming the first.

Of course, Obama's own ancestral relationship to slavery can be found on the white rather than the black side of his family tree. His Kenyan father arrived in America after receiving a prestigious scholarship rather than by being sold into slavery. Six generations ago, however, an ancestor on his maternal side was a slave owner in Kentucky.

But the first lady does directly descend from African slaves, and therefore she and the Obama children are wholly part of the legacy of slavery. And to see them ponder the historical significance of the Door of No Return—a place where tens of thousands of shackled men and women were transported from dungeons to the hulls of sailing ships—as representatives of the most powerful office on Earth was profound.

Generally perceived as the symbol of an overdog nation, U.S. presidents are rarely seen in the position of directly empathizing with the victims of history. (And when they do, it's generally in the pose of vengeful warrior, such as in the days after Pearl Harbor or 9/11.) Calling the visit a "moving experience," Obama refrained from the linear moral logic of latter-day crusaders. He did not merely condemn slavery and the wrongs that went with it. In fact, by calling the Door of No Return "the portal through which the diaspora began," he embraced it—and all its horrors—as a sort of birthplace.

"As African-Americans," he said, "there is a special sense that on the one hand this place was a place of profound sadness, but on the other hand, it is here where the journey of much of the African-American experience began."

Reminiscent of the plaque in Mexico City that declares that the clash between the conquerors and the conquered produced the "painful birth of the Mexican people," Obama's remarks offered a sophisticated embrace of the moral complexities of history. Rather than denying America's responsibility for the tragedy of slavery or, on the other hand, partaking in the creation of an alternative his-

By GREGORY RODRIGUEZ
Special to the *Los Angeles Times*

Rodriguez, a columnist for the Times' opinion pages, is director of the California Fellows Program at the New America Foundation.



tory of the U.S. that seeks to expose only the bad, Obama's visit and brief remarks remind us that we Americans are also born of the clash between conqueror and conquered.

In so doing, he undermines the simplistic racial and moral binary language that we tend to speak in. This was not the visit of a white American president who either felt defensive or obliged to apologize for the evils of white supremacy. And from his singular place in global racial iconography, the president also put a redemptive—and peculiarly American—spin on history. He said the old slave station "reminds us that as bad as history can be, it is also possible to overcome."

Nor could a white U.S. president have said to African leaders what Obama did. Assuming a posture that his predecessors could never have employed, Obama told Africa that it could no longer blame the West for all of its problems.

"Yes, a colonial map that made little sense bred conflict, and the West has often approached Africa as a patron rather than a partner," he told the Ghanaian parliament. "But the West is not responsible for the destruction of the Zimbabwean economy over the last decade or wars in which children are enlisted as combatants."

Citizens of other countries have long looked at the U.S. as some sort of kaleidoscope through which they sometimes recognize glimpses of themselves. Germans like to take credit for the invention of jeans by Levi Strauss. French tourists flock to New Orleans. Spaniards enjoy ticking off the names of Southwestern cities that their ancestors founded.

The first family's historic visit to Africa suggests that Obama's presidency is adding an entirely new dimension to how the world sees the U.S., as well as how we see ourselves. There are millions of Americans who have been on both sides of history—as winners and as losers. More than anything else, the one thing that keeps us together as a nation is the promise and belief that we can overcome.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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Planning inputs

"Plans are nothing; planning is everything."

—General Eisenhower

After the successful invasion of Normandy, General Dwight David Eisenhower was asked about the detailed planning process that went into the invasion. He made the above quote because he understood that the planning process of carefully considering all the options, examining the resources, and reviewing contingencies were essential to victory, but he also knew that the moment the battle begins, the situation changes so much that the original plan will be obsolete without continually reviewing the various factors that go into the planning process.

Some people are strategic thinkers and they automatically envision obstacles that may be encountered and essential resources to achieve the plan; however, the vast majority of people spend more time planning a weekend picnic or vacation than they do making a plan for their business. They are more reactive than proactive, which means they're constantly "putting out fires."

In order to be a better planner, you must examine how internal factors could strengthen or weaken your ability to achieve the plan, or if there are external opportunities or threat you should consider. These considerations provide valuable information for you to formulate a strategy that will build on your strengths and take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing or eliminating the effects of weaknesses and threats. Here are 10 planning inputs that should be considered in the planning process to ensure that the plan is viable and reliable:

1. Stakeholders. Who are the individuals, groups, or entities that have some stake in your organization and can make a claim on your resources, output, or are affected by that output? Customers, employees, investors, suppliers, and the community are just some of your stakeholders, and they can positively or negatively impact your organization. Their input is essential to not only meet their needs, but to make ethical decisions that will satisfy their interests and create greater "buy in" to the plan.

2. Mandates. These are the formal and informal expectations and requirements that your organization must consider and that can either help or hinder your strategy. They can be local or federal laws, codes, or regulations. They can also be expressed formally or informally through community or customer expectations, guarantees, policy, procedures, regulations, and budget requirements.

3. Revenue Sources. Identify all the sources of revenue for your company from sales or passive sources such as rentals, licensing, or investing. You may want to subdivide the sources based on product lines or customer groups so you can make decisions. Some organi-

zations may be eligible for local or federal funding through grants, donations, and philanthropic sources. Some sources are stable and ongoing, while others may be expected, but not guaranteed.

4. Competitors. This can be either your direct competitors that offer similar products or services, or indirect competitors that provide an alternative choice for your target market. This is typically the greatest threat to a company because competitors take market share and encourage customers to spend their limited dollars at their business. Once you identify your main competitors, you should analyze their business by doing a SWOT analysis (looking at their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) with each business so you can compare them against your business. This also helps to understand your brand image and positioning in the marketplace.

In order to be a better planner, you must examine how internal factors could strengthen or weaken your ability to achieve the plan, or if there are external opportunities or threat you should consider. These considerations provide valuable information for you to formulate a strategy that will build on your strengths and take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing or eliminating the effects of weaknesses and threats.

5. Forces and Trends. There are many forces and trends that can have a dramatic or subtle impact on your strategic plan. Here are some things to consider in each of these forces:

Political and legal forces are important to review and understand since changes in the laws, immigration status, elections, and turnover of politicians can have a major impact on your business.

Economic forces are a current reality, and the changing international, national, and local economies have a direct impact on your business.

Socio-cultural changes can help you identify any trends or social changes that can impact your business decisions.

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGRAS

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Technological changes rapidly and you should be ready to adapt to the changes that affect your business.

International events thousands of miles away have an impact on the CNMI. These should be considered in order to determine the threats or opportunities they offer.

Physical and natural changes are always a consideration. Typhoons can cause major damage and require repairs. Buildings and equipment need ongoing maintenance and replacement.

6. Present Strategy & Plan. By evaluating your present strategy or plan you can determine how accurate it is so you can fine-tune your new plan.

7. Prior Performance. Your prior performance can help you estimate your future performance or identify your greatest opportunities or obstacles.

8. Liabilities. Debts and other obligations must be understood and reviewed to develop a realistic plan. Liabilities can divert resources needed to achieve goals and objectives, or affect your credit rating if payments are not made in a timely manner.

9. Internal Resources. Internal resources include such things as technology, equipment, buildings, furniture, vehicles, and any other tangible or intangible items you own that are needed for you to realize your plan.

10. External Resources. There are many resources available to you by utilizing other people's skills, knowledge, experience, money, ideas, and contacts. A lot of these are available if you know where to look and can offer a reciprocal benefit for the assistance of others.

You can see that there are a lot of things to consider when you develop your strategic plan. One of the reasons why so few people plan is because they might feel overwhelmed with the many considerations. However, the more thorough your research, the less surprised you will be when it comes time to implement the plan. You will find that your business decisions are more proactive, and your competition will be in a reactive mode trying to keep up. Continually monitoring these inputs and forces and making adjustments is what turns the plan into a living document.

Immigration pitfall: Why 'legalization only' won't fly

President Obama looks to be gearing up to make good on his campaign promise of comprehensive immigration reform. But unlike in 2006, when Democratic and Republican reformers agreed on what was needed in an overhaul, this year there's a new fault line.

It surfaced last month when Obama called lawmakers to the White House to discuss immigration, and Sen. John McCain led pro-reform Republicans in pushing back against the president. Obama had said little about what he wants in a bill—in fact, he has been studiously vague. But McCain knew enough about what has (and has not) been said recently by immigration experts close to the White House and those pushing Obama to take up reform that he felt it necessary to launch a preemptive strike.

This year, in contrast to 2006, organized labor and many Latino advocates are thinking about slicing up the reform package and moving forward with a piecemeal approach: a bill that legalizes the unauthorized immigrants already in the United States—call them the "stock"—but makes no provision for those who will want to work north of the border in years ahead, the future "flow."

The reasoning is clear: With unemployment edging toward 10 percent, it's hard to argue that the United States needs foreign workers. And organized labor, particularly the AFL-CIO, has seized on the opportunity to graft its larger agenda onto the immigration debate.

But this view is shortsighted. Just as it would have been a mistake in a Republican era to pass an expanded temporary worker program but leave out legalization and a path to citizenship, so, too, would it be a mistake now to legalize immigrants who are here without creating a way for future workers to enter the United States legally.

To understand why, consider U.S. politics. With no pipeline for future workers, McCain will not vote for the bill. Without him, there will be no other Senate Republicans. And without Senate Republicans, there won't be enough Democrats, given the inevitable defections among Blue Dogs, New Democrats and other moderates.

Then there is Mexican politics. This is not discussed much on Capitol Hill, but the United States can't hope to implement an immigration overhaul without help from Mexico—help administering legalization and dissuading future illegal immigration. And no Mexican government can afford to cooperate with Washington unless the reform includes a significant increase in temporary worker visas. This was true during the administration of President Vicente Fox, and it's even truer today for the beleaguered President Felipe Calderon.

But ultimately, the problem with "legalization only" is bigger than politics in either country. The economic downturn may have cut the traffic from Mexico—as much as 25 percent, by some estimates. Yet once the economy begins to recover, demographic and economic reality will kick in again on both sides of the border.

When the economy begins recovering, U.S. housing starts will climb, restaurants will fill up again, Americans will take the vacations they've been putting off and more. Revitalized businesses will once again need foreign workers for jobs that increasingly educated Americans do not want.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, for five to 10 more years at least, the working-age population will continue to grow faster than the number of decent-paying jobs, and young workers will continue to want to go where they can make a better living. It's supply and demand—to the benefit of both countries.

The United States can recognize this reality and harness it—or pretend it doesn't exist and live with the costs of denial. If these workers cannot enter the United States legally, they will find ways to enter illegally, no matter how much border and work-site enforcement is in place, no matter how dangerous the trip or how high the price. Hoping that people will stop coming is as illusory as thinking that those already in the United States will pack up and go home.

The bottom line is that the only way to stop illegal outflows from Mexico is to legalize them, adapting the law to reality, not the other way around.

By JORGE G. CASTANEDA and TAMAR JACOBY

Special to *The Washington Post*

Jorge G. Castaneda was foreign secretary of Mexico from 2000 to 2003 in the government of Vicente Fox. He teaches international relations at New York University. Tamar Jacoby is president of Washington-based ImmigrationWorks, a national federation of employers advocating immigration reform.



Some have suggested a "third way": creating a commission to determine how many workers are needed in the United States. But it's hard to see how that would work. Discredited as markets are today, they're still the best way to match supply with demand. Though markets must be regulated, they don't work very well when they're micromanaged. Will a commission be able to determine how many Mexican workers are needed from month to month—and then ensure that only that number enters the country? Not very likely.

Comprehensive immigration reform makes sense for the United States and for Mexico for economic and ethical reasons; it's good foreign and domestic policy. What doesn't make sense is a seemingly expedient but ultimately unworkable piecemeal approach. Neither legalization without future flows nor future flows without legalization will solve the problem. Only the two together can get the job done.

Pacific

PNG eyes hydro project, glass factory in Oro province

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—A glass factory is being proposed in the Oro Province after the Divune hydro electric scheme is completed and is fully operational.

A visit last week by the Czech ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Dr Jan Fury, and consul general Robert Wong to the proposed project sites in Waju cemented the understanding between the Czech Republic and Oro Province.

Dr Fury said the Czech Republic was well known throughout the world for its skills in designs and constructions in technologies, hydro power technologies (huge plants and also small scale hydro projects suitable for rural areas).

Dr Fury said his country was also known for its technology and equipment for glass factories, food production technologies and equipment and solidarity on these projects should ensure early success.

He said the relationship between the Czech Republic and the Oro Provincial Government must be maintained and enhanced, especially the interest shown by the province in inviting the Czech Republic to develop the two proposed projects.

"In this way, the two projects, the Divune hydro scheme and the proposed glass factory can materialise," Dr Fury said.

The Vice-Minister for Public Service and Member for Sohe Anthony Nene said the Divune hydro project was a viable business venture that would meet its own operational costs.

Mr. Nene said the glass factory project was dependent on the hydro power project.

"It must first be constructed and start supplying the rapidly growing permanent market in the National Capital District of power and water before the second project starts," he said.

Nene said the project would need several governments to interact to develop a realistic approach.

"The hydro project is self sustaining and the borrowings can be repaid by the permanent income to be received for electricity and water, both are renewable, not just by name, by the users and residents in NCD and the rural people in Central Province, even Milne Bay and Lae," Nene said. He added that the expansion of commerce and business in the province had been restricted by the cost of electricity.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Samoa prime minister: Fiji 'waste of time'

APIA, Samoa (Samoa Observer/PIR)—One of the issues discussed by Samoa's Prime Minister and New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs is the situation in Fiji. Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi said the problem faced by Fiji will not be a major issue any longer. "I told Mr. McCully to just leave Fiji and we talked about matters for the betterment of the Pacific region," he said. "The leaders of the Forum should not waste any more time on Fiji." The future of the Pacific region is important this was the focus of his discussion with McCully. The two also considered important issues for the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Australia next month.

Tonga foreign reserves up in July

NUKUALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga/PIR)—TONGA'S official Foreign Reserves held by the National Reserve Bank for June rose by 4.2 million pa'anga [US\$2 million] to \$136.3 million, the highest so far for the year. A statement from the NRBT on July 17 said the June foreign reserve is equivalent to 5.1 months of imports of goods. The rise reflected an increase in foreign receipts by banks and the Government together with lower fuel import payments during the month. The foreign reserves continue to look good this year as June records the highest for the year and higher than the \$89.1 million recorded in June 2008. The May foreign reserves stood at \$132.1

US clamps down on A. Samoa funding

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (Samoa News/PIR)—The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has informed Gov. Togiola Tulafono of special conditions imposed in funding for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 for American Samoa as the territory remains on 'high risk' status because of several unresolved financial issues.

In a June 23 letter, Philip A. Maestri, director of Risk Management Service for USDOE informed Togiola that while USDOE appreciates ASG's efforts and continued cooperation "to address the challenging grant management and fiscal accountability issues," there continues to be "significant deficiencies in ASG's administration of Federal education funds" and these must be resolved.

In particular, Maestri points to "payroll, procurement, property management, and generally, the development and implementation of effective internal controls to ensure accountability for Federal funds."

"Lack of adequate policies and procedures and enforcement in these areas draw into question ASG's ability to administer and account properly for the use of Department (USDOE) grant funds," Maestri wrote.

He notes because ASG is in the early stages of using a comprehensive Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and Payroll Corrective Action Plan (PCAP) to address its systemic control and fiscal deficiencies, "its status as a 'high-risk' grantee will continue..."

Maestri added that USDOE is imposing special conditions on all USDOE funds awarded to ASG agencies.

Enclosed with the letter are the special conditions to be incorporated in the FFY 2009 grant awards to ASG for all of the Federal education programs it administers and that also apply to grant

funds previously awarded by USDOE to ASG that are still available for obligation or liquidation on the date of these special conditions.

This includes grants awarded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

Maestri said the special conditions require ASG to report quarterly to USDOE on its ef-

orts and initiatives to implement corrective actions and controls in accordance with the PCAP, and to provide a semi-annual report to USDOE on its progress in implementing measures required under the CAP.

This includes the current status of ASG's implementation of the various measures and, if necessary, any changes in the targeted completion dates and/

or person(s) responsible for ensuring that a particular corrective action is implemented, he said.

USDOE approved the Payroll Corrective Action Plan (PCAP) on March 16, 2009 in response to a payroll attestation audit conducted in February/March last year by the independent public accounting firm of R.C. Holsinger Associates (RCHA).



NEW FIBER OPTIC CABLE

Dancers representing Hawaii, red, and the Samoas join to form a link at a ceremony celebrating the launch of a new fiber optic cable on Tuesday, July 7, 2009 in Pago Pago, American Samoa. AP

Samoa seeks 50 percent increase in tourism

APIA, Samoa (Samoa Observer/PIR)—Samoa aims to increase tourist arrivals by up to 50 percent over the next five years.

In his speech at the launch of the Samoa Tourism Development Plan on Friday, Deputy Prime Minister Misa Telefoni said the country was experiencing a tourism boom with arrivals dramatically up in the past two years.

In 2008, for example, there were nearly 125,000 tourism arrivals bringing in WST290 million [US\$109 million], up from

100,000 spending WST205 million in 2007.

"Occupancy rates, across the spectrum have risen dramatically," he said and called for increased emphasis on tourism development investment, both local (Aggies Resort, Manumea, Eliza, Milleneum, Alaimoana) and overseas (Reddy Holdings – Tusitala, and Warwick – Vavau).

"We must also improve our products, not just increase our inventory of rooms," said Misa citing the WST10 million refur-

bishments at Tanoa Tusitala.

Entertainment at the launch of the Tourism Development Plan. Photo: Ron Kubik.

He also spoke of the need to increase frequency of flights, including the new service Apia/Honolulu return to be launched by Air Pacific in September.

Over the next five years, he said, the challenge for the industry was to increase visitor arrivals by 40 percent to 50 percent or to 170,000 to 190,000 while increasing visitor room nights to more than 1 million

Leaky ship is Tokelau's perilous lifeline

APIA, Samoa (Samoa Observer/PIR)—The New Zealand territory of Tokelau, made up of three tiny tropical coral atolls, is one of the hardest places in the world to get to. It is battered continuously by waves and wind whipping across the South Pacific, and there's no airport or airstrip. The only way in and out of Tokelau is by boat, and the trip takes 26 hours on a good day.

Tokelau is 500 kilometers north of Samoa, and its 1,200 or so residents are totally reliant on the boat the MV Tokelau, which was given to them by the

New Zealand government in the 1970s. The vessel takes them to and from Samoa and brings in essential supplies.

Tokelau's leader, Foua Toloa, says in fine weather the trip to Samoa usually takes about a day but once in a storm he spent 48 hours on the boat and feared for his life the whole way.

"You know sometimes when it's really rough ... you just bow your head and pray that you will get home," he said.

Despite the very real risk of the boat sinking, Toloa says more Tokelauans than ever before want to make the perilous

journey to Samoa.

In 2005 the MV Tokelau made 13 trips; last year it made about 40.

"We have one boat, it's not in good condition," he said. "Ten years ago it was at the end of its life, but we're maintaining the boat for that service. There have been cases, many cases, whereby sick people are put on fishing boats fishing in the area to come down and bring the patients to Apia." Toloa is convinced Tokelauans living in Australia and New Zealand aren't traveling home because they're scared about dying on the boat trip.

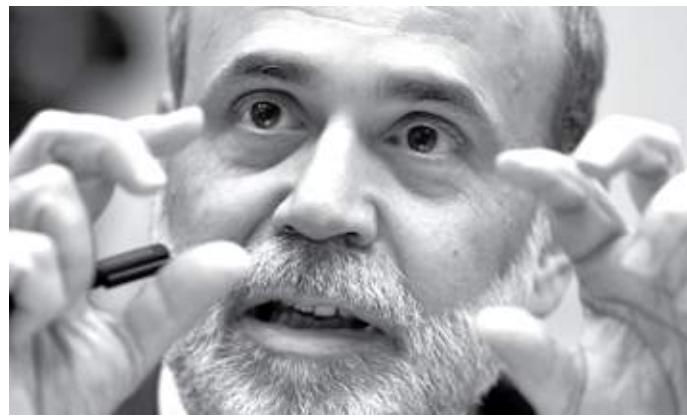
Business

Bernanke heads back to Capitol Hill—and hot seat

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke heads back to Capitol Hill Wednesday, where he's likely to face more tough questions about the central bank's extraordinary actions to rescue the economy and its ability to take on even more responsibility.

Last year's taxpayer-financed rescues of insurance giant American International Group and others have touched a nerve with the public and some lawmakers.

Although Bernanke's innovative policies have been credited with averting a financial catast-



Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke delivers a report on the country's economic and financial health before the House Financial Services Committee, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, July 21, 2009.

trophe last year, critics worry about putting taxpayers' money at risk and creating a situation where companies may feel more inclined to take big gambles on the belief that the government will clean up their messes.

Bernanke, who is slated to appear before the Senate Banking Committee at 10 a.m. EDT, argues that a collapse of AIG would have put the entire financial system and the broader economy in peril.

Provisions included in the Obama administration plan to overhaul financial oversight, if they were to become law, would avoid a repeat of additional AIG-like taxpayer bailouts, says Bernanke.

The Fed chief also is likely to run into fresh skepticism from senators wary of expanding the Fed's duties to police big financial companies as envisioned by the administration. Some mem-

bers of the House Financial Services Committee on Tuesday argued that the Fed failed to spot problems that led to the financial crisis in the first place.

Bernanke countered that the administration's proposal would be a "modest reorientation" of the Fed's powers, not a great expansion of them.

All the hand-wringing on Capitol Hill about the future shape of the Fed—as well as the nation's broader regulatory structure—comes at a politically delicate time for Bernanke. His term expires early next year, and President Barack Obama will have to decide whether to reappoint him.

The Fed chief on Tuesday also sought to assure investors and Congress that the central bank will be able to reel in its economic stimulus and prevent a flare up of inflation once a recovery is firmly rooted.

CIT says bankruptcy filing still a possibility

NEW YORK (AP)—CIT Group Inc. said in a regulatory filing Tuesday that it might have to file for bankruptcy protection if not enough bondholders participate in a recently launched debt exchange.

The commercial lender offered the grim assessment only a day after major bondholders agreed to provide it with a \$3 billion rescue loan. CIT, one of the nation's largest lenders to small and midsize businesses, was forced to scramble in recent

weeks to line up new funding as it faced mounting liquidity pressure amid upcoming debt maturities and as customers tapped their credit lines.

CIT said in the filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that the new loan might not provide enough relief to cover the liquidity squeeze.

CIT said it still needs to pay off about \$7 billion in debt maturing over the next year, including \$1 billion in August. It has launched an offer to repay

that \$1 billion in maturing debt at a discount.

Shares of CIT tumbled 27 cents, or 21.6 percent, to 98 cents Tuesday.

CIT was forced to turn to bondholders in recent days for help after the government refused to save the company last week.

CIT said late Monday it had reached a deal with key bondholders, including bond manager Pimco, to receive a 2.5-year secured loan facility.

For more people, scales tip toward buying a home



In this May 14, 2009 photo, Andrea and Aaron Carter paint their new home in Glendale, Ariz. It is the Carters' first home.

By ALEX VEGA
AP REAL ESTATE WRITER

Nuclear power, St. Paul's supposed bones

Interactive Rent or Buy? Calculate the cost of owning a home

For Aaron Carter, a musician who was struggling to fit a drum set, a piano and three guitars into his 600-square-foot apartment in Phoenix, the math on owning a home finally began to work in his favor.

Rent for the apartment he shared with his wife: \$615. Mortgage payment for a home with twice the space: \$760. And the interest on a mortgage is tax-deductible. So they jumped at the chance to buy some elbow room.

"We figured that everything together, getting more space, getting out of the apartment life and also just the prices right now, it just was the perfect time for us as a couple" to buy, said Carter, 20.

For Americans debating whether to buy or rent their homes, the scales are tipping toward ownership. Because of the slide in home prices, low interest rates and tax incentives, renters are realizing they could handle a mortgage for a just little more money.

An Associated Press analysis of 45 metro areas finds the gap between the monthly mortgage payment on a median-priced home and the median rent has shrunk from \$777 a month to just \$221 in the past

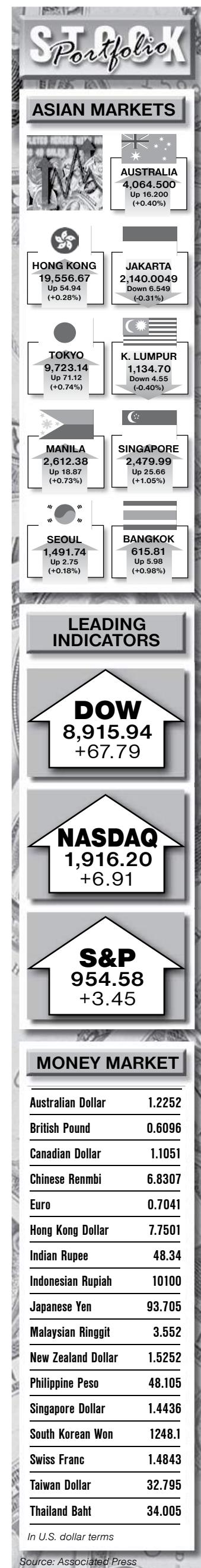
BUSINESS BRIEFS

Airlines report earnings, higher fees and job cuts

DALLAS (AP)—Southwest Airlines and the parent of United made money in the second quarter, but the profits were overshadowed Tuesday by more job cuts and pessimism over the severe slump in travel and rising fuel costs. Continental Airlines reported a big loss and said it would cut 1,700 more jobs. Passengers can expect another wave of higher fees in the form of increased baggage fees to sweep through terminals around the country, with carriers trying to offset revenue lost to lower fares and promotions. Southwest Airlines Co. broke a string of three straight losing quarters by scratching out a small gain. But Chairman and CEO Gary C. Kelly said that he couldn't predict another profit in the third quarter because of weak travel demand and higher fuel prices.

Yahoo 2Q profit rises 8 pct despite weak ad sales

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Yahoo Inc. eked out a slightly higher profit in the second quarter as its new, no-nonsense chief executive cut enough expenses to shake off the Internet company's sharpest drop in ad revenue since the dot-com bust. The worsening ad slump overshadowed Yahoo's first quarterly earnings increase since the start of 2008, causing the company's shares to fall more than 2 percent after the results were released Tuesday. Yahoo also said it plans to spend at least \$75 million promoting its brand, hiring more engineers and improving some of its services during the third quarter. On top of that, the Sunnyvale-based company expects to surrender about \$75 million in revenue by reducing the volume of ads that management has identified as being too obnoxious.



Nation

Senate sides with Obama, removes F-22 money

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate voted Tuesday to halt production of the Air Force's missile-eluding F-22 Raptor fighter jets in a high-stakes showdown over President Barack Obama's efforts to shift defense spending to a new generation of smaller F-35 Joint Strike Fighters.

The 58-40 vote reflected an all-out lobbying campaign by the administration, which had to overcome resistance from lawmakers confronted with the potential losses of defense-related jobs if the F-22 program was terminated.

"The president really needed to win this vote," Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., said. Levin said it was important not only on the merits of the planes but "in terms of changing the way we do business in Washington."

The top Republican on the commit-

tee, John McCain of Arizona, agreed that it was "a signal that we are not going to continue to build weapons systems with cost overruns which outlive their requirements for defending this nation."

Supporters of the program cited both the importance of the F-22 to U.S. security interests—pointing out that China and Russia are developing planes that can compete with it—and a need to protect aerospace jobs in a bad economy.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and other Pentagon officials have determined that production of the F-22, which has not been used in Iraq and Afghanistan, should be stopped at 187 planes in order to focus on the F-35, which would also be available to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, countered that the F-35 is designed to supplement,

not replace, the F-22, "the 'NASCAR racer of this air dominance team.'" Supporters of the F-22 have put the number needed at anywhere from 250 to 380.

The defense bill has funds to build 30 F-35s. The plane is currently being produced in small numbers for testing purposes. The single-engine plane will eventually replace the venerable F-16 and the Air Force's aging fleet of A-10s. Its primary purpose is to attack targets on the ground.

The twin-engine F-22 Raptor is a jet the Air Force would use for air-to-air combat missions.

McCain said the voting margin of victory was "directly attributable" to Obama, his opponent in the last presidential election, and Gates, who has pushed for termination of the F-22 and other weapons systems he says have outlived their usefulness.



This June 22, 2009 photo released by the U.S. Navy shows an Air Force F-22 Raptor executing a supersonic flyby over the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis in the Gulf of Alaska.

AP

Democrats divided on health care overhaul

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Democrats put their divisions on display over the details and timing of health care legislation Tuesday despite fresh attempts by President Barack Obama to hasten a compromise on the issue that looms increasingly as a major test of his clout.

With a self-imposed deadline for action in jeopardy, the Democratic leadership juggled complaints from conservatives demanding additional cost savings, first-term lawmakers upset with proposed tax increases and objections from members of the rank-and-

file opposed to allowing the government to sell insurance in competition with private industry.

"No one wants to tell the speaker that she's moving too fast and they damn sure don't want to tell the president," Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., a key committee chairman, told a fellow lawmaker as the two walked into a closed-door meeting. The remark was overheard by reporters.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., vowed weeks ago that the House would vote by the end of July on legislation to

meet two goals established by Obama months ago. The president wants legislation to extend health coverage to the tens of millions who now lack it, at the same time it restrains the growth in the cost of health care far into the future. The president also has vowed that the legislation will not swell the deficit, although a senior administration official told reporters Tuesday that the pledge does not apply to an estimated \$245 billion to increase fees for doctors serving Medicare patients over the next decade.

Analysis: Gates arrest a signpost on racial road

It took less than a day for the arrest of Henry Louis Gates to become racial lore. When one of America's most prominent black intellectuals winds up in handcuffs, it's not just another episode of profiling—it's a signpost on the nation's bumpy road to equality.

The news was parsed and Tweeted, rued and debated. This was, after all Henry "Skip" Gates: Summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale. MacArthur "genius grant" recipient. Acclaimed historian and PBS documentarian. One of Time magazine's "25 Most Influential Americans" in 1997. Holder of 50 honorary degrees.

If this man can be taken away by police officers from the porch of his own home, what does it say about the treatment that average blacks can expect in 2009?

Earl Graves Jr., CEO of the company that publishes Black Enterprise magazine, was once stopped by police during his train commute to work, dressed in a suit and tie.

"My case took place back in 1995, and



In this photo taken by a neighbor Thursday July 16, 2009 Henry Louis Gates Jr. center, the director of Harvard University's W.E.B.

here we are 14 years later dealing with the same madness," he said Tuesday. "Barack Obama being the president has meant absolute-

ly nothing to white law enforcement officers. Zero. So I have zero confidence that (Gates' case) will lead to any change whatsoever."

Investigator rules against Palin in ethics probe

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—An independent investigator has found evidence that Gov. Sarah Palin may have violated ethics laws by trading on her position as she sought money for lawyer fees, in the latest legal distraction for the former vice presidential candidate as she prepares to leave office this week.

The report obtained by The Associated Press says Palin is securing unwarranted benefits and receiving improper gifts through the Alaska Fund Trust, set up by supporters.

An investigator for the state Personnel Board says in his July 14 report that there is probable cause to believe Palin used or attempted to use her official position for personal gain because she authorized the creation of the trust as her legal defense fund.

The practical effect of the ruling on Palin will be more financial than anything else. The report recommends

that Palin refuse to accept payment from the defense fund, and that the complaint be resolved without a formal hearing before the board. That allows her to resolve the issue without a formal ethics reprimand.

Palin posted an entry on Twitter in which she said the "matter is still pending," a statement echoed by her lawyer.

The fund aims to help Palin pay off debts stemming from multiple ethics complaints against her, most of which have been dismissed. Palin says she owes more than \$500,000 in legal fees, and she cited the mounting toll of the ethics probes as one of the reasons she is leaving office on Sunday.

Kristan Cole, the fund's trustee, said organizers have frozen the fund pending the personnel board's review. Politicians are routinely allowed to have such funds to pay off legal bills, but quirks in Alaska law can present ethics issues.

ACROSS THE NATION

Report: US immigration raids violated rights

NEW YORK (AP)—Immigration agents raiding homes for suspected illegal immigrants violated the U.S. Constitution by entering without proper consent and may have used racial profiling, a report analyzing arrest records found. Latinos made up a disproportionate number of the people arrested who were not the stated targets of the raids, and many of their arrest reports gave no basis for why they were initially seized, said the report, which was based on data

from raids in New York and New Jersey. The Immigration Justice Clinic at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law analyzed home raid arrest records from Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in Long Island and throughout New Jersey. The clinic, founded last year, represents indigent immigrants facing deportation.

Minn. man killed by deputy after day of swimming

KASOTA, Minn. (AP)—A plain-

clothes sheriff's deputy shot and killed an unarmed 24-year-old man wearing only swim trunks after an argument ensued when he confronted the man for erratic driving, authorities and witnesses said Tuesday. Le Sueur County Sheriff's investigator Todd Waldron, 37, shot Tyler Heilman after the two scuffled Monday in Kasota, a town about 60 miles southwest of Minneapolis, when Heilman returned from a day of swimming with friends. Those who saw the argument said it wasn't clear the man he was fighting with was a law

enforcement officer. "This ain't right," said Heilman's father, Mark Heilman. "I think the cop just freaked ... Why didn't he just say 'Freeze' or something? Or shoot him in the leg? He shot to kill ... I think he just flipped."

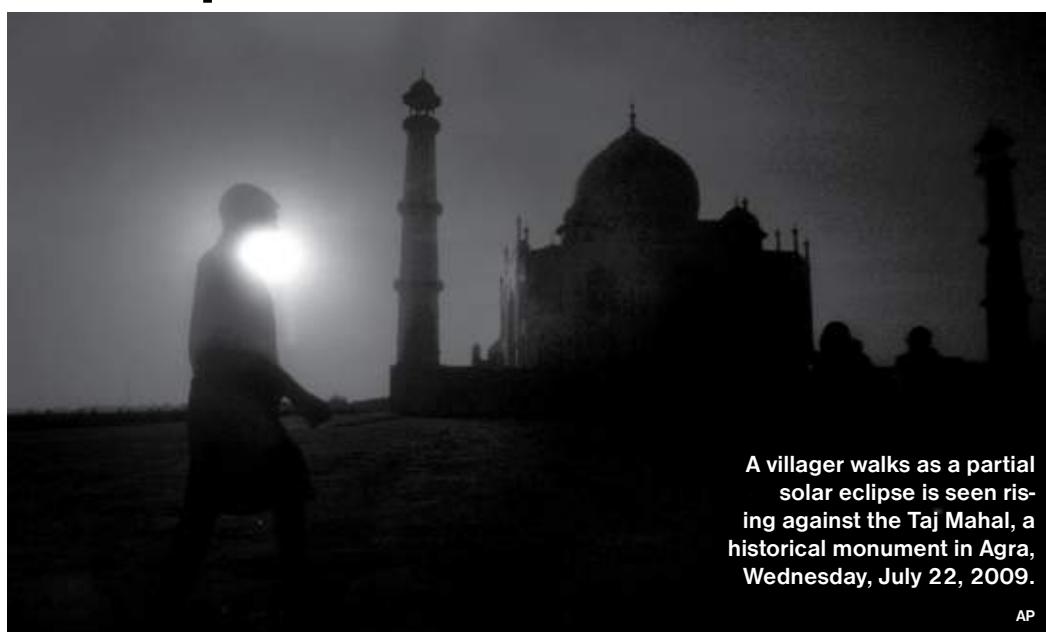
Dog drags newborn from family home in Ky.

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP)—A father was frantically calling 911 to report his missing newborn when he spotted the baby, bleeding from the mouth and clutched in the jaws of a family dog

who had carried him from his crib to the heavily wooded backyard. Four-day-old Alexander James Smith was rushed to the emergency room at University of Kentucky Hospital in Lexington, where he was listed in critical condition Tuesday with two collapsed lungs, a skull fracture, broken ribs and various cuts and bruises. His father, Michael Smith, said doctors were optimistic the boy would survive, but a day earlier they braced the family for the worst and had to use resuscitation paddles to get a heartbeat.

Asia

Solar eclipse shrouds Asia in darkness after dawn



A villager walks as a partial solar eclipse is seen rising against the Taj Mahal, a historical monument in Agra, Wednesday, July 22, 2009.

AP

TAREGNA, India (AP)—The longest solar eclipse of the 21st century pitched a swath of Asia from India to China into near darkness Wednesday as millions gathered to watch the phenomenon. But millions more, gripped by fear, shuttered themselves in. India abounds in superstitions and fables based on Hindu mythology, one of which says an eclipse is caused

when a dragon-demon swallows the sun.

The eclipse is caused when the moon covers the sun completely to cast a shadow on earth. In some parts of Asia it lasted as long as 6 minutes and 39 seconds.

Thick cloud cover over India obscured the sun when the eclipse began at dawn. But the clouds parted in several cities,

minutes before the total eclipse took place at 6:24 a.m. (0054 GMT; 8:54 p.m. EDT).

In neighboring Bangladesh, people came out in droves.

“It’s a rare moment, I never thought I would see this in my life,” said Abdullah Sayeed, a college student who traveled to Panchagarh town from the capital Dhaka to view it.

Mumbai gunman describes indoctrination in Pakistan

MUMBAI, India (AP)—An Indian court that heard a stunning confession from the lone surviving gunman in the Mumbai terror attacks put a gag order on his latest testimony—a message to his handlers in Pakistan and a description of the indoctrination he received before coming to India.

The order resulted in a rare information blackout in what has been one of the best docu-

mented terror attacks in history, with video footage, cell phone intercepts, photographs and witness accounts playing across the media for months.

The judge on Tuesday deferred a decision on whether to accept Ajmal Kasab’s unexpected confession, which has complicated the already onerous task of defending a man whose image—he was photographed

toting a gun and striding through Mumbai’s main train station—quickly became an emblem of the carnage.

The confession, which describes in detail a shadowy but well-organized network of training camps and safe houses across Pakistan, also bolsters India’s charges that Islamabad is not doing enough to clamp down on terrorist groups.

Clinton declares the US ‘is back’ in Asia

BANGKOK (AP)—On her second trip to Asia as U.S. secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton is carrying a no-nonsense message about American intentions.

“The United States is back,” she declared Tuesday upon arrival in the Thai capital.

By that she means the administration of President Barack Obama thinks it’s time to show

Asian nations that the United States is not distracted by its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and intends to broaden and deepen its partnerships in this region.

Clinton was trumpeting that line Wednesday in an appearance with a prominent TV personality before flying to a seaside resort at Phuket for two days of international meetings to discuss North

Korea, Myanmar and a range of other regional issues.

Clinton says she would, as previously announced, sign ASEAN’s seminal Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, a commitment to peacefully resolve regional disputes that has already been signed by more than a dozen countries outside the 10-nation bloc.

simply fed up with the LDP,” said Martin Schulz, an economist at Fujitsu Research Institute in Tokyo. “This is not just a power game right now. This is a shift in sentiment.”

Taliban kill 6 in attacks in 2 Afghan cities

GARDEZ, Afghanistan (AP)—Suspected Taliban militants armed with bombs, rifles and rocket-propelled grenades launched near-simultaneous assaults Tuesday on Afghan and U.S. facilities in two eastern cities, killing six Afghan police and intelligence officers. The attacks in Gardez and Jalalabad may have been aimed at relieving pressure on Taliban

fighters in southern Afghanistan—the focus of U.S. and British operations against the hard-line Islamic militants.

Indonesia detains 17 suspects in Freeport killings

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Police detained 17 suspects believed involved in a series of deadly ambushes at the world’s largest gold mine, an official said Tuesday. The men were rounded up Monday at several locations within a few miles of the Grasberg mining complex operated by U.S. conglomerate Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc., said Papua Police Chief Bagus Ekodanto.

World

Global health officials mull how to slow swine flu

GENEVA (AP)—Some Muslim countries are advising pregnant women not to attend the hajj pilgrimage. China is quarantining any visitor suspected of having a fever, while priests in New Zealand have been banned from placing Communion wafers on worshippers’ tongues.

It’s all part of a global effort to slow the spread of swine flu until a vaccine is ready, although experts are divided on whether the measures will work.

Students across Europe may have their summer vacations extended after the World Health Organization said Tuesday that closing schools was one option countries could consider.

Deaths from the H1N1 virus have doubled in the past three weeks, to over 700 from about 330 at the start of July, the agency said.

“We expect to see more cases and deaths in the future,” WHO spokeswoman Aphiluck Bhatiasevi told The Associated Press in Geneva.

The agency gave no breakdown, but as of last week, the United States had reported 263 deaths, Canada had 45 and Britain had 29. According to WHO’s last update on July 6, there were 119 deaths in Mexico.

Yet even the latest figures may seriously underestimate the true toll because not all swine flu cases are being picked up due to testing limitations.

The race is now on to develop a vaccine that is effective against the pandemic strain before the flu season begins this fall in the northern hemisphere. Estimates for when a vaccine will be available range from September to December.

In the meantime, the U.N. health agency is working with its national counterparts around the world to examine what countries can do.

“School closures is one of the mitigation measures that could be considered by countries,” Bhatiasevi told reporters.

Experts have argued that school closures may be among the most effective measures, but warn there may be a considerable economic downside, too.

Honduras orders Venezuelan diplomats expelled

gations and—holed up in the embassy along with a consular officer also affected by the order—vowed to defy it.

“We only have relations with the government of President Manuel Zelaya,” Vargas told reporters outside the building. He said the expulsion order “does not exist for us, because the Micheletti government does not exist. It is a usurper government, a coup government, a government that is not recognized by anyone on an international level.”

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras

(AP)—Honduras’ interim government ordered Venezuelan diplomats on Tuesday to leave the country as the international community threatened new sanctions on the Central American nation if negotiations fail to resolve the crisis.

Venezuelan Embassy charge d’affaires Ariel Vargas said he received a letter from the Honduran Foreign Ministry ordering his diplomats to leave in 72 hours.

Venezuelan President Hugo

Chavez has been the most vociferous critic of what he calls the “gorilla” government that overthrew his ally Manuel Zelaya on June 28.

The government of Roberto Micheletti, whom congress swore in as president after the coup, accused Venezuela of meddling in its affairs and of threatening to use its armed forces against Honduras, according to a copy of the letter obtained by The Associated Press.

Vargas dismissed the alle-

Biden: Ukraine need not worry about US-Russia ties

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—Vice President Joe Biden assured a nervous Ukraine that its interests won’t be sacrificed as the United States tries to mend ties with Moscow.

Visiting Kiev two weeks after President Barack Obama attended a Moscow summit, Biden said Russia can claim no “sphere of influence” in its backyard. The U.S. vice president travels next to another for-

mer Soviet republic, Georgia, which lost a five-day war with Russia last year over separatist provinces that Moscow insists are independent states.

Russia has responded angrily to efforts by the pro-Western leaders of Ukraine and Georgia to distance their countries from Moscow and seek NATO membership.

As confrontation simmers between Moscow and the West

WORLD BRIEFS

Amnesty says Saudi terror fight plagued with abuse

CAIRO (AP)—Saudi Arabia is holding more than 3,000 people in secret detention and has used torture to extract confessions in its anti-terrorism crackdown since the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, Amnesty International said in a report Wednesday.

The report criticized the international community for turning a blind eye to the kingdom’s methods in its crackdown. Saudi Arabia has carried out a heavy wave of arrests against al-Qaida members in past years after the militant group carried out a string of attacks against expatriate residential compounds, oil facilities and government buildings. “These unjust anti-terrorism

measures have made an already dire human rights situation worse,” said Malcolm Smart, head of Amnesty’s Middle East and North Africa program, in a press release.

Report: Brazil official calls Israeli FM ‘fascist’

SAO PAULO (AP)—Israel’s foreign minister ran into controversy on the first day of a Latin American trip Tuesday when an official of Brazil’s ruling party reportedly called him a “fascist.” Israel’s Haaretz newspaper reported that Valter Pomar, secretary of international relations for the Workers Party, said that Avigdor Lieberman is a racist and a fascist” during an interview. Haaretz reported that Pomar also said that “the Brazil-

ian left is organizing protests” against Lieberman “and against the policy he represents.”

Woman detained in Mexican pro wrestlers deaths

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Police have detained a woman in the deaths of two professional wrestlers who were found drugged in a low-rent hotel in the Mexican capital, prosecutors said Tuesday. The 65-year-old suspect is one of two women caught on surveillance video leaving the victims’ hotel room, Mexico City prosecutors said in a statement. The statement said an autopsy on the two wrestlers, who were brothers, detected a substance found in eye drops that can damage the nervous system when mixed with alcohol.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Japan PM urges voters to say no to change

TOKYO (AP)—Prime Minister Taro Aso, who triggered new elections when he dissolved the powerful lower house of Japan’s parliament on Tuesday, launched his party’s fight for survival with a familiar refrain: Reject change. It’s a message that has kept the ruling Liberal Democrats in power for most of the past 55 years. But Japanese voters are leaning sharply toward something new this time, and Aso’s warnings about the dangers of change may not be enough to prevent a historic loss in next month’s elections. “It really looks like Japanese voters are

Environment

Helping preserve the environment from the desk

By JOSE PALACIOS MAFNAS JR.

SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Hafa Adai! Tirow! My name is Jose Palacios Mafnas Jr. I am 19 years old and currently a third year student attending college off-island at Chaminade University of Honolulu. I'm in pursuit of a Bachelor's of Science degree in Criminal Justice and possibly a law degree in the future. I am a summer intern for the Division of Environmental Quality working with the legal counsel for DEQ, Assistant Attorney General, Kathryn B. Fuller, J.D. I was informed about this internship by a good friend of mine and I jumped at the opportunity to participate in protecting the environment and natural beauty of my island—my home.

One might wonder what exactly I have to do at DEQ as a legal counsel intern. The Office of the Attorney General serves as DEQ and the Coastal Resources Management Office's legal counsel and advisory office. No laws, regulations, or policies regarding environmental issues or internal policies are published in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas until they are first reviewed by the legal counsel division. Many of the policies concerning our islands must be reviewed by a specialist in environmental law to ensure the process works as smoothly as possible and that our environment is protected.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jose Palacios Mafnas Jr. is a summer intern for the Division of Environmental Quality working with the legal counsel for DEQ, Assistant Attorney General, Kathryn B. Fuller, J.D.

pieces of litter or construction debris could affect and possibly kill different forms of coral and marine life. The fact that we live on an island makes the ocean much more difficult to maintain since waste and debris must go somewhere and the last stop is usually the ocean via run off or other forms of transportation. Either way, it still affects

As an intern with the legal counsel for DEQ and CRM, I have become quite well acquainted with most of the regulations that DEQ has for things such as pesticides, used oil, water, earth moving, erosion control, etc., particularly the enforcement sections. For the past three weeks, a few of my projects and work include organizing all of DEQ's internal policies and regulations and organizing DEQ enforcement regulations into a more convenient and understandable chart. All of DEQ's regulations can be found on its website at <http://www.deq.gov.mp/section.aspx?secID=15>. My current project is to organize all of these policies into a friendlier manner and not so much "lawyer talk," and possibly publish it to the public.

By reading through these different policies, I have come to appreciate the enforcement work of the employees of the Division of Environmental Quality and Coastal Resources Management Office more and more. I have learned that even simple



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jose Palacios Mafnas Jr. took delegates to the recent Pacific Islands Environmental Conference: Climate of Change to a snorkeling trip in the waters around Managaha Island.

Coral Reef Initiative interns tell their stories

This summer, the *Saipan Tribune*'s Thursday Environment Page will feature articles written by students participating in the 2009 Coral Reef Initiative Internship Program at Coastal Resources Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Environmental Quality.

In their own words, the interns will share the experiences they have had and the skills they have gained from working in fields ranging from marine biology to outreach and education.

The program has paired the

students-more than a dozen this year-with mentors experienced in their respective careers. Each intern will work on a variety of projects, including a number of community events and marine monitoring activities, through August.

For seven years, the program has provided opportunities for CNMI students to gain valuable work experience while learning about efforts underway to protect and conserve our precious natural resources.

By bringing students into the agencies and supporting hands-on and in the field experiences,

the program encourages students to pursue studies and careers in the conservation field. This year, DEQ and CRM welcomed back three summer internship alumni to their staff: Janice Castro, DEQ, Rodney Camacho, CRM, and David Benevente, CRM. These recent college graduates bring with them a commitment to the CNMI and our precious natural resources.

For more information on summer internship opportunities, contact Brooke Nevitt at Coastal Resources Management Office, 664-8320 or brooke.nevitt@crm.gov.mp. (DEQ)

the natural beauty of our island. With that said, I fully support any type of enforcement and regulation that protects our environment and I am thankful for the opportunity to do my part in protecting the environment for future generations.

Although most of my work is office work, I have had a few opportunities to participate in the field. As an intern, I have the chance to participate in reef flat surveys every few weeks to assist in recording the marine life at certain areas. I have already

had the opportunity to participate in a survey at Kilili Beach and I have three more in the future at different locations.

This summer internship has been particularly special for the other interns and me because we had the chance to participate

in the Pacific Islands Environmental Conference: Climate of Change, which included delegates and colleagues from the islands of Hawaii, Pohnpei, Palau, Guam, American Samoa, and the CNMI. We had the opportunity to meet and greet different individuals who have had tremendous success in helping the environment in their respective homes and listened to those who took the time to share just how they did it. With DEQ as the main host, many of the interns and employees took the delegates on a tour of Saipan's different attractions. I had the chance to take some delegates on a snorkel tour around one of Saipan's environmental gems, Managaha.

In the coming weeks, I will get to work more closely with the enforcement divisions of DEQ and possibly the Criminal Division of the Office of the Attorney General. This will allow me to see my work in full circle, from reading and organizing policies to actually enforcing them in the public to ensure the preservation of our island's natural beauty, biodiversity, and marine life.

This summer internship has been a true blessing. It has only been three weeks and I have already begun to learn an abundance about Saipan's marine life and have also had the opportunity to see them for myself a few times. Although most of my work is done in the office, working at the Division of Environmental Quality has taught me that everyone has their part in protecting the environment. From office work to field work or picking up a couple pieces of litter off the road to actually enforcing the law, it all makes a difference for the preservation of our island habitat. We all have the ability to make a difference and I encourage you all to do your part in protecting your island home! (DEQ)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Brooke Nevitt, Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Coastal Resources Management Office, and Olivia Tebuteb, Division of Environmental Quality, distribute outreach material at the fishing derby.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Division of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officer Tony Mareham displays posters of the CNMI's marine protected areas (MPAs).



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
John San Nicolas, CRM Enforcement Officer, picks up a bilge sock for taking the Clean Boater Pledge.

Anglers take clean boater pledge at derby

More than 50 fishermen pledged to be environmentally friendly boaters when they registered at the 25th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

A total of 75 vessels, with 250 participating anglers, entered the competition, which took place the weekend of July 18, 2009.

Outreach teams from the Division of Environmental Quality and the Coastal Resources Management Office handed out free goodies, including floatable key chains, "Dive, Snorkel, Protect CNMI!" stickers and bilge socks—one for each boat.

These socks prevent pollution by absorbing and solidifying the oil, diesel and gasoline that can accumulate in the bilge of a boat. This allows for proper disposal of the liquids and helps prevent pollution in the ocean.

Before taking the materials, the

anglers added their names to a list, pledging to take steps such as keeping CNMI's waters litter free and practicing proper fueling.

"The event is one of the most prestigious for the CNMI, and since we're involved in natural resources, especially marine resources, we need to partner with these participants (fishermen). They're our stakeholders and we need to work with them to protect our marine resources," said Jack Ogumoro, one of the derby's organizers and CNMI's Wespac coordinator.

Division of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officer Tony Mareham was also on hand to

help educate the anglers about marine protected areas, which are typically established to

help support fish populations in the areas surrounding MPAs. (DEQ)

Life & Style

28 finalists named in '7 Wonders of Nature' poll

GENEVA (AP)—The Grand Canyon, the Matterhorn and the Great Barrier Reef are competing with 25 other spectacular natural landmarks in the final phase of the global poll to choose the "New 7 Wonders of Nature."

The Amazon rainforest, the Dead Sea, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Ecuador's Galapagos islands are also among the finalists, the organization New 7 Wonders led by Swiss adventurer Bernard Weber said on Tuesday.

People can vote by Internet or phone. The winners will be announced in 2011 and share in the glory already enjoyed by the seven man-made wonders chosen two years ago.

Over 1 billion people are expected to join in the voting, Weber said.

"This campaign should contribute

to the appreciation—to the knowledge—of our environment and not just the one in our country but worldwide," he told The Associated Press. "If we or our children want to save anything, we should first appreciate it."

The finalists also include Azerbaijan's Mud Volcanoes, Lebanon's Jeita Grotto, Ireland's Moher Cliffs and Germany's Black Forest.

A panel of experts chose the finalists among the 77 nominees that gained the most votes in an early round of polling. People had suggested 261 landmarks in countries all over the world.

The panel chaired by Federico Mayor, former chief of UNESCO, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, picked the finalists depending on geographical balance, diversity

and the importance to human life.

Weber said he was happy the nominees included places that lie in more than one country, such as the Dead Sea or the Amazon rainforest, which makes people work together across borders.

High voter participation has come from Asian countries, including Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and Vietnam, as well as from Latin America, he said.

"U.S. voters' participation is always quite high," he added.

Africa, where most people vote by mobile phones, has had the biggest increase in votes over the last few weeks, Weber said.

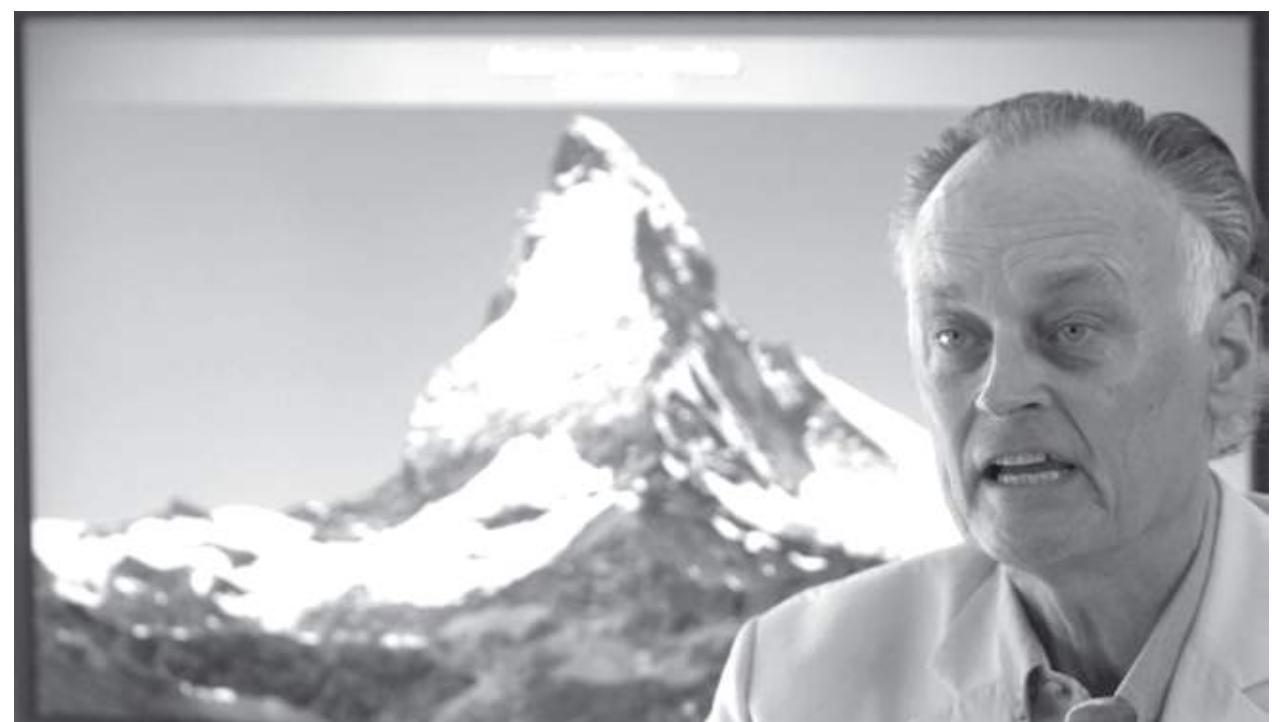
Weber declined to give any specific numbers of votes so far. But the organization plans to release details about voter profiles later. Registration on the

Web site aims to prevent people from voting twice.

Around 100 million people voted in the selection of the seven manmade wonders in 2007. The winners were the Colosseum, Italy; the Great Wall of China; the Taj Mahal, India; Petra, Jordan; Christ the Redeemer Statue, Brazil; Machu Picchu, Peru; and the Pyramid at Chichen Itza, Mexico.

Choosing world wonders has been a continuing fascination over the centuries. UNESCO keeps updating its list of World Heritage Sites, which now totals 890 places.

The New 7 Wonders campaign aims to promote cultural diversity by supporting, preserving and restoring monuments and natural sites. It relies on private donations and revenue from broadcasting rights.



The Matterhorn mountain, one of the finalists, is seen on a screen, as Swiss Bernard Weber, founder and president of the "New 7 wonders" campaign, announces the 28 finalists of the New 7 Wonders of Nature global campaign in Zurich, Switzerland, Tuesday, July 21, 2009.

Fla. man sued over Batman character figurines

BRADENTON, Fla. (AP)—It's enough to make Batman retreat to the Batcave.

A Florida man has been sued by DC Comics for selling figurines that resemble Batman characters—though he says they're meant to portray actors from the 1960s "Batman" television series.

In a lawsuit filed in federal court in Tampa, DC Comics accuses John Stacks of committing copyright and trademark infringement, among other violations, with his resin composite figurines. The characters in question include Batman, Robin, Catwoman, the Joker, Batgirl, the Penguin, the Riddler, Egghead and King Tut.

New York-based DC Comics claims they wrote Stacks and requested that he stop selling the figurines, but that he continued.

"They come after little people like me," Stacks told The Tampa Tribune. "I don't have anything."

Stacks told the paper he has contracts with all the actors represented by his figurines. Several of the actors in the show are now deceased, and other who could be reached did not immediately return requests for comment.

Christina Gorshin, wife of the late

Frank Gorshin, who played the Riddler, recognized Stacks' name but couldn't say whether her husband had consented to the use of his image.

"I have no clue what their contact was," she said.

A spokesman for Burt Ward, who played Robin, said the actor has no affiliation with Stacks "whatsoever."

Stacks operates his company under the name "Johnny's Resin Kits" out of Bradenton, Fla., about 50 miles south of Tampa. Reached Monday, Stacks repeated his intentions to portray the actors, not the characters.

"It was never meant to be Batman, never," Stacks said.

On a screen grab of Stacks' Web site presented in the complaint, a disclaimer notes that the figures are meant to portray an actor and not any characters owned by DC Comics.

"We're trying to work it out," Stacks said of the suit. He declined to elaborate.

DC Comics' attorney would not comment on the case. A company spokesman would not comment on Stacks' claim that he is representing the actors, saying only, "We have every reason to believe this matter will

be resolved amicably."

The company is asking Stacks to stop making and selling the figurines and that he deliver any remaining products, molds, and other materials for destruction. They are also seeking monetary compensation.

Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles on vocal rest

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Sugarland singer Jennifer Nettles is on vocal rest after canceling two shows over the weekend.

In a video message to fans posted on the duo's Web site, Nettles said she has been dealing with voice problems since January.

She says she "blew her voice" from the combination of singing in the studio and on the road.

Sugarland canceled their Saturday appearance with Kenny Chesney in San Francisco and their Sunday concert with Keith Urban in Los Angeles.

The duo, which also includes guitarist Kristian Bush, are scheduled to perform Thursday in Sandy, Utah.

Jackson Browne, Republicans settle lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jackson Browne has settled a lawsuit and received an apology from Sen. John McCain and the Republican Party over use of his song "Running on Empty" during last year's presidential campaign.

The settlement announced Tuesday includes a pledge by the GOP not to use any musicians' work without proper permission in future campaigns, a statement that Browne said he hoped would benefit other artists.

Browne sued McCain and the Republican National Committee and the Ohio Republican Party last year over use of "Running on Empty" in a Web ad mocking Democrat Barack Obama's proposed energy policies.

McCain's loss in November didn't end the lawsuit, which had been slated for trial early next year. Formal settlement papers have yet to be filed with the court.

"This settlement is really a great affirmation of what I believed my rights to be, and all writers' rights to be," Browne said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"One would hope that a presidential candidate would not only know the law but respect it. It was a matter of bringing that issue to bear."

Financial details of the settlement were not announced.

McCain didn't know about the ad, which was created by the Ohio Republican Party and removed after Browne complained, said the statement, attributed to McCain and the state and national parties.

"We apologize that a portion of the Jackson Browne song 'Running on Empty' was used without permission," the statement said.

Browne said he hoped the lawsuit and its successful resolution would have an impact on future political campaigns by putting an end to cavalier attitudes about artists' copyrights.

"I would hope that they would think twice about taking someone's song without permission and understand that the law was put to the test and our rights prevailed," he said.

McCain's campaign ran afoul of

"Thousands of people come to an event or they see it on TV and they see John Mellencamp's song being used or Ann and Nancy Wilson's song being used and they assume a kind of solidarity and a kind of endorsement that simply does not exist," Browne said.

"Hopefully it will just go to illustrate there is a legal remedy for this."

Browne and his attorney both said they expect the settlement, apology and McCain and the parties' high profiles to prevent some future problems.

"The educational significance cannot be understated," said Browne's attorney, Lawrence Iser, a partner in the entertainment litigation firm Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump & Aldisert.

"People like Jackson have the right to license the use of their songs for political campaigns, or to choose not to," Iser said. He noted that even though the ad using Browne's song played on the Internet, copyright law doesn't differentiate between those and other broadcasts.

Browne said the typical remedy to misuse of one's music is to file a copyright infringement lawsuit, but that not all musicians can afford that. He brought his lawsuit, he said, to help protect the next generation of artists.

"If you don't uphold the law that allows people to make a living from this, the result is you won't have people able to do this work," Browne said.



In this Oct. 21, 2008 file photo, Jackson Browne arrives at the The Dream Believe Achieve Inspiration Gala in Los Angeles.

'Criminal aspects' probed in Jackson memorial cost



In this March 17, 2005 file photo, Pop star Michael Jackson arrives at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse in Santa Maria, Calif., to begin Jackson's trial on charges of child molestation. AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Investigators looking into the chain of events that led City Hall to spend an estimated \$1.4 million for police protection and other services at Michael Jackson's memorial have turned up possible criminal wrongdoing, the city attorney said Tuesday.

The disclosure two weeks after Jackson's lavish farewell came amid a public backlash over the taxpayer bill, which included more than \$48,000 for sandwiches brought in for police from 70 miles away.

City Attorney Carmen Trutanich has been reviewing the procedures that led the city to deploy thousands of police and other city workers for the star-studded tribute at the downtown Staples Center, hoping to identify a way for taxpayers to recoup at least some of the money.

"Our investigation has taken an unanticipated turn that raises both civil and criminal aspects," Trutanich told the City Council. The investigation is continuing, but he said he could not reveal any further details about possible criminal activity.

Trutanich later told the Council his office had exchanged correspondence with AEG, the company that owns the Staples Center. Subsidiary AEG Live was the promoter behind Jackson's planned comeback concerts in London.

"That letter is an investigative-type letter," said Trutanich spokesman John Franklin. "He's asking questions and wanting them to produce certain things."

"His main goal here is to recoup the taxpayers' money. When you are dealing with the civil aspect, that's basically it," Franklin added.

Staples did not reply to an e-mail sent to its media office. AEG Live spokesman Michael Roth did not return a phone call.

The city attorney's office prosecutes misdemeanors, but the office could also pass on any evidence it uncovers of more serious violations to the county district attorney.

The city's involvement in the Jackson event, which was broadcast worldwide, has been marked by confusion. An attempt to collect donations from Jackson fans to help cover the costs was later abandoned by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who at first supported the idea.

The Police Department deployed 3,200 officers after projecting that as many as 250,000 people would converge on downtown streets for the service. Beyond ticket holders, only about 1,000 fans showed up.

The City Council is seeking a full accounting of the taxpayer dollars committed to Jackson's tribute. Councilman Dennis Zine has said the cost of the event could far surpass the estimate.

Group forms to head off Neverland development

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Neighbors of Neverland are organizing against any move to turn Michael Jackson's former home into a tourist destination that could disturb the area's rural tranquility.

Residents of the rural Santa Ynez Valley announced a new group Monday called "Never!"

It is backed by area community organizations that want to head off any attempts to convert the Neverland ranch in remote Los Olivos into a commercial venue, spokesman Bob Field said.

Field said the area does not have the roads, police or other infrastructure to support crowds drawn to a Graceland-like tourist attraction, which he said would disrupt the enclave's tranquility.

Such a development would require the property to be rezoned from agricultural to commercial use, a lengthy process that would require a series of public hearings where residents could express their opposition.

Santa Barbara County spokeswoman Nicole Koon said officials have not been contacted by the property's owners or the Jackson family about a zoning change.

Property co-owner Thomas Barrack, meanwhile, has not proposed developing the site, but Field said the Santa Ynez Valley residents in his group want solid reassurances that he won't.

"We have received mixed messages, some reassuring, some troubling," he said. "We'd like clear, concrete signs that there are no plans to pursue turning this into a tourist attraction."

The Los Olivos Business Organization, which consists of the wineries, restaurants and boutiques along the town's short commercial strip, released a separate statement Monday stating its opposition to a Graceland-like venue in its midst.

Owen Bicksilver, a spokesman for Colony Capital LLC, the Los Angeles-based firm where Barrack is chairman and CEO, had no immediate comment.

Field, the former chairman of a county-appointed community planning committee, said he was suspicious of Barrack's motives for inviting dozens of local politicians and opinion leaders to the ranch for tours, followed by lavish breakfasts or barbecue dinners.

Field, who joined one of the tours, said a Barrack representative assured guests at the event that there were no immediate plans to attempt to have Jackson buried at the ranch or to convert it to a tourist attraction.

But the representative did not unequivocally disavow such plans. Field was also concerned that staff members distributed baseball caps embroidered with "Neverland 2009" to guests.

Field called on Barrack to enter into a land conservation agreement with the state that gives tax breaks to rural landowners who agree not to develop their property.

Neverland previously enjoyed the so-called Williamson Act tax protections, but was withdrawn from the agreement during Jackson's ownership, Field said.

White House goes a little bit country

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House went a little bit country Tuesday.

"Now, I know folks think I'm a city boy, but I do appreciate listening to country music," President Barack Obama said to guests gathered in the East Room for a performance by country musicians Alison Krauss and Union Station.

Brad Paisley and country music legend Charley Pride also entertained the audience, which included first lady Michelle Obama, Cabinet secretaries and lawmakers.

The president, whose hometown is Chicago, said the genre has helped to make Americans more hopeful. "It's captured our restlessness and resilience, and told so much of our story in the process," he said.

The performance, along with a morning workshop for students, was the second in a music series that Mrs. Obama launched last month to encourage arts and arts education. The first session was devoted to jazz. A classical music workshop is planned for the fall.

Earlier, Paisley, Krauss and Union Station taught 120 middle and high school music students from Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia about music and song writing.

Paisley and Krauss started their ca-

reers early. Krauss, who plays the fiddle, signed a record deal at 14; the guitar-playing Paisley was just 13 when he appeared on a country music show.

Krauss said she would listen to music all day but "I didn't think I would ... end up doing it as a career."

not have anything to fall back on, that's for sure."

Paisley and Krauss sat on stools in the State Dining Room in front of a large portrait of a pensive-looking President Abraham Lincoln. Krauss played one piece on her fiddle, and



AP
Country music stars Alison Krauss and Brad Paisley sing and talk about their work as part of the White House music series celebrating country music in the State Dining Room at The White House in Washington Tuesday, July 21, 2009.

Paisley's grandfather, a country music lover, gave his grandson a guitar for Christmas when Paisley was 8. And the rest is country music history. "I've really not been good at much else," Paisley said. "Thankfully I was able to do this for a living because, as I said, I did

sang another. Paisley also sang. Both answered questions from the students. One of the participants, Sal La Rosa, of Nashville, Tenn., who just finished the fourth grade, also performed a song he wrote as part of a music education program sponsored by the Country Music

Hall of Fame.

Paisley and Krauss talked about the family support they've enjoyed along the way to country music stardom.

"Music is like being up at bat," Paisley told the students. "It's really very much like stepping up to the plate. And you can have all the support in the world but it's up to you guys to really get where you want to go."

LA County leaders vote in support of Wagner opera

LOS ANGELES (AP)—County supervisors have voted to support the Los Angeles Opera's planned festival next year celebrating Wagner's epic "Ring" cycle despite one supervisor's protest over the composer's anti-Semitic views.

The Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 Tuesday in support of a motion by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky replacing a motion by Supervisor Mike Antonovich.

Antonovich wanted to add pieces by other composers to lessen the focus on Wagner because of his anti-Semitic writings.

Antonovich spokesman Tony Bell says the supervisor is disappointed at Tuesday's outcome, but intends to work with the opera company to make improvements in the next year.

The opera says the festival, which will spotlight Wagner's four-part cycle, will include seminars and discussions to address Wagner's anti-Semitism.

Marc Anthony becomes a Dolphins minority owner

NEW YORK (AP)—New Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross had to be loving the scene: the flashbulbs glittering, the passers-by straining to catch a glimpse, the questions asked and answered in Spanish.

This was the kind of energy Ross sought when he added singer Marc Anthony as a minority owner. The Dolphins held the news conference Tuesday not in Miami but in the media mecca of Manhattan, with the bonus buzz of a cameo by Anthony's wife, Jennifer Lopez.

There was Anthony presenting his wife with a Dolphins jersey as an early 40th birthday gift. There was the celebrity couple kissing before the sing-

er-actress, wearing a short pink dress, slipped back offstage.

Ross wants to reach out to new fans, and in South Florida, that automatically includes the Hispanic community. Singer Gloria Estefan and her husband, producer Emilio Estefan, already bought a small stake in the club last month.

"I'm not doing this as a singer; I'm not doing this as an actor," Anthony said. "(It's) just because I love football. Steve and I, our visions are in sync, and this is a great, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a part of Steve's vision."

Anthony will perform the national anthem when the Dolphins host the New York Jets on ESPN's "Monday Night Foot-

ball" on Oct. 12 as part of the NFL's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

"There's no other place in America that has such a diverse community as Miami and certainly no place in the United States that has a greater Latin culture than South Florida," Ross said.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and ESPN president George Bodenheimer also attended the news conference in an upscale mall at Columbus Circle. But the spotlight was all on Anthony.

The 40-year-old singer grew up a Giants fan in New York. He said he's had the "itch" to buy into a sports team for about three years.



AP
Singer Marc Anthony and his wife actress Jennifer Lopez hold up Miami Dolphins jerseys during a news conference Tuesday, July 21, 2009, announcing Anthony's minority ownership in the team in New York.

Alicia Silverstone, Laura Linney set for Broadway

NEW YORK (AP)—Alicia Silverstone will join Laura Linney on Broadway this season.

They will star in "Time Stands Still," a play by Donald Margulies (MAHR'-guh-lees). Linney will play a photojournalist who was wounded while covering the Iraq war. Silverstone will portray the young girlfriend of the woman's photo editor.

"Time Stands Still" opens Jan. 28, 2010, at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. Previews begin Jan. 5.

Silverstone starred in the film "Clueless." She made her Broadway debut in 2002 in the stage version of "The Graduate."

Linney portrayed Abigail Adams in the 2008 HBO series "John Adams."



In this June 3, 2009 file photo, Alicia Silverstone arrives at the premiere of "Tetro" in Los Angeles.

'Billy Elliot' begins its tour in Chicago in March

NEW YORK (AP)—"Billy Elliot" will begin dancing across North America next March.

Producers of the Tony-winning best musical say the show will begin its tour in Chicago, opening for an extended run at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre.

Exact dates, casting and other cities on the tour will be announced later. "Billy Elliot," which features a score by Elton John and Lee Hall, is based on the film about a British coal miner's son who dreams to dance.

The musical is currently playing in London and New York.



In this May 12, 2005 file photo, crowds gather outside the world premiere of the stage musical 'Billy Elliot' at a London theatre.

Susan Boyle: Fame is like 'giant demolition ball'

NEW YORK (AP)—Susan Boyle says sudden fame hit her like a "giant demolition ball."

The Scottish singing sensation tells NBC's "Today" show, in an interview to air Wednesday, that adjusting to her overnight celebrity has been difficult.

When asked if she felt overwhelmed by fame, Boyle says:

"It's a lot like a giant demolition ball." Boyle says she had to wrap her head around the experience, but is glad for the opportunity to have a professional singing career.

Her interview on the NBC morning show was taped in London last week.

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Sun. thru Thurs. 1:05 4:10 7:15

Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson
Fantasy, Adventure, Sequel • Rated PG-13

Synopsis

Voldemort is tightening his grip on both the Muggle and wizarding worlds and Hogwarts is no longer the safe haven it once was. Harry suspects that dangers may even lie within the castle, but Dumbledore is more intent upon preparing him for the final battle that he knows is fast approaching. Together they work to find the key to unlock Voldemort's defenses and, to this end, Dumbledore recruits his old friend and colleague, the well-connected and unsuspecting bon vivant Professor Horace Slughorn, whom he believes holds crucial information.



Bruno

Fri. and Sat. 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:45
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:10 4:15 7:30

Sacha Baron Cohen, Gustaf Hammarsten
Comedy • Rated R

Synopsis

Borat trickster Sacha Baron Cohen returns to the big screen to offer yet another stinging dose of sociopolitical satire in this comedy that finds him assuming the persona of gay fashionmonger Bruno, the self-proclaimed "voice of Austrian youth TV." Originally conceived as part of Cohen's cult television series *Da Ali G Show*, the character of Bruno offered a cleverly costumed Cohen the opportunity to highlight the absurdities of the fashion industry by interviewing unsuspecting fashion icons and other haute couture hangers-on.



Ice Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs

Fri. and Sat. 1:20 4:30 7:25 9:30
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:20 4:30 7:25

John Leguizamo, Queen Latifah
Family-Oriented Adventure • Rated PG

Synopsis

After the events of *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, life begins to change for Manny and his friends: Scrat is still on the hunt to hold onto his beloved acorn, while finding a possible romance in a female sabre-toothed squirrel named Scratte. Manny and Ellie, having since become an item, are expecting a baby, which leaves Manny anxious to ensure that everything is perfect for when his baby arrives. Diego is fed up with being treated like a house-cat and ponders the notion that he is becoming too laid-back.



Public Enemies

Fri. and Sat. 1:25 4:20 7:05 9:55
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:25 4:20 7:05

Johnny Depp, Christian Bale
Crime Drama • Rated R

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen

Fri. and Sat. 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:00 4:00 7:00

Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox
Sci-Fi Action • Rated PG-13



My Sister's Keeper

Fri. and Sat. 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:55
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:30 4:25 7:20

Cameron Diaz, Abigail Breslin
Family Drama • Rated PG-13

The Proposal

Fri. and Sat. 1:15 4:05 7:10 9:40
Sun. thru Thurs. 1:15 4:05 7:10

Sandra Bullock, Ryan Reynolds
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG-13

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Actor Stephen Baldwin files for bankruptcy

Dane Cook's half brother arraigned on new charges

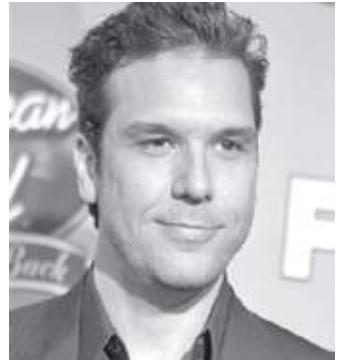
WOBURN, Mass. (AP)—The half brother of Dane Cook has pleaded not guilty to additional charges that he stole millions of dollars from the comedian.

Darryl McCauley was arraigned Tuesday in Middlesex Superior Court in Massachusetts. He was ordered to continue to be held on \$1 million bail.

Prosecutors say the 43-year-old Wilmington man wrote company checks to himself and transferred funds into his personal bank accounts while working as Cook's business manager.

McCauley was arrested in December and initially indicted in March. Earlier this month, a grand jury indicted him on 20 additional charges of larceny over \$250.

Robert Goldstein, McCauley's attorney, did not immediately return a phone call Tuesday. Goldstein has said his client denies taking money from Cook without his consent.



In this April 6, 2008 file photo, actor Dane Cook arrives at the "Idol Gives Back" fundraising special of "American Idol" in Los Angeles.

Kiefer Sutherland gets NYC assault charge dropped

NEW YORK (AP)—Kiefer Sutherland's legal troubles for allegedly head-butting a fashion designer in a New York City nightclub are over.

The Manhattan district attorney's spokeswoman said Tuesday that misdemeanor assault charges against the actor are being dropped because the alleged victim wouldn't cooperate with prosecutors.

The star of the Fox TV show "24" was charged in May after designer Jack McCollough said Sutherland head-butted him and broke his nose in a Manhattan nightclub. Sutherland and McCollough issued a joint statement a few weeks later saying they had resolved their differences. Sutherland apologized to McCollough in the statement.

Sutherland's attorneys declined to comment Tuesday.



NEW YORK (AP)—Court records show actor Stephen Baldwin is millions of dollars in debt and has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

A filing Tuesday in federal court in New York shows that Baldwin owes \$1.2 million in two mortgages on a property about 30 miles north of New York City valued at \$1.1 million. The document shows he

In this Feb. 3, 2009 file photo, actor Stephen Baldwin arrives at the premiere of "The Pink Panther 2" at the Ziegfeld Theatre.

AP

also owes more than \$1 million in taxes and has about \$70,000 in credit card debt.

His wife, Kenny Baldwin, is also named in the filing.

Baldwin's lawyer, Bruce Weiner, did not immediately return a message left for him late Tuesday.

Baldwin has appeared in several films including "The Usual Suspects." Last month, he left the Costa Rican set of the NBC show "I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!" after he said he got more than 125 insect bites in eight days.

Publicist: Mischa Barton 'making improvements'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mischa (MEE'-shah) Barton is "making improvements" and plans a return to work nearly a week after Los Angeles police say they escorted her for an undisclosed medical problem.

Spokesman Craig Schneider says the 23-year-old actress is "still seeking treatment but making improvements."

He would not elaborate on Barton's condition, but said Tuesday that Barton planned to report to work on the new CW series "The Beautiful Life" later this month. A CW spokesman for the show, which stars Barton as a pill-popping supermodel, said production was scheduled to begin July 31.

Police say they removed Barton from her home last Wednesday for an undisclosed medical problem. The department will not say what it was.

In this April 21, 2009 file photo, actress Mischa Barton arrives at a central London hotel for the launch of a new handbag collection.

AP



O'Neal opens up about Fawcett's final hours



NEW YORK (AP)—Ryan O'Neal says even as Farrah Fawcett lay dying, she clung to life.

O'Neal tells NBC's "Today" show that doctors said Fawcett had a couple of hours left, but she held on for a couple of days.

O'Neal says Fawcett "wouldn't pass," and "it was awful."

He says Fawcett's eyes were open for the last three weeks of her life. He thinks she was "holding on," since she had so much left to do.

Finally, he says, Fawcett closed her eyes and she was gone.

She died last month after a long battle with anal cancer.

O'Neal says he writes to Fawcett in his journal, fulfilling a promise he made to his longtime love. He said he'd "see her every day" after her death.

In this March 5, 1989 file photo, actors Ryan O'Neal, left, and Farrah Fawcett are shown at the premiere of the film "Chances Are," in New York.

Dad deciphers son's secret through keystroke recording

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: My 16-year-old son, "Derrick," recently stopped talking to me. Frustrated about not being able to open the lines of communication, I installed a keystroke recorder on our home computer. It enabled me to see what Derrick was writing in his e-mails. I know it was a violation of his privacy, but I was afraid and didn't know who else to ask what was going on.

I learned that Derrick has gotten his girlfriend pregnant. They are discussing various options, and he is thinking about running away from home.

How can I help my son through this, having gained this information in an underhanded way? If I reveal how I learned about this, I will lose his trust forever. But if I don't help him, I don't know what will happen. Please help me.

SPY DAD IN TEXAS

DEAR SPY DAD: You may not have to tell Derrick how you got the information. You are his father. Sit him down, tell him you love him, that he's the most important thing in this world to you and that you're worried sick because he has become secretive and uncommunicative. Tell him that if he's in any sort of trouble he won't be punished or lectured to and that you will do whatever it takes to help him. And do not let him get up until he has finally told you what is wrong.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Why is President Barack Obama considered to be African-American? Isn't he bi-racial?

WONDERING IN GOLDSBORO, N.C.

DEAR WONDERING: He is both. The term African-American is used in this country as a label that describes skin color—although in President Obama's case he is literally African-American because his father was an African from Kenya, and his mother was an American from Kansas. However, the term bi-racial is equally accurate because it describes mixed-race ancestry.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been a professional musician for more than 25 years, playing piano in restaurants, lounges, stores, etc. My problem is I have never been able to talk and play at the same time. I must wait until I'm through with a song to talk to a customer.

I know that pianists appear to do this in movies, but those are actors who aren't really doing the playing—someone else is.

When someone tries to talk to me in the middle of a song, I can either: (a) stop playing and answer the question, making the rest of the audience unhappy, or (b) struggle to answer and end up making mistakes and, perhaps, even losing my job.

I can't be the only pianist with this problem. Do you have any advice for me—and can you print this so people will be more respectful to musicians?

WAIT 'TIL IT'S OVER IN OHIO

DEAR WAIT: I have it on good authority, as well as personal experience in piano bars years ago, that many pianists can not only play and talk, but also play and sing. Having made it through a quarter of a century at the keyboard, I doubt you need much advice, but I'll offer this tidbit: Post a discreet sign atop your piano asking listeners to please refrain from making requests while you're playing. You might also consider a small metal tray upon which they can place their "requests."

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



Dear Abby

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pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The) FCD GU
Petition To Appoint) Civil Action
General Guardianship) No. 09-0400
For:)
KUINO BENBAR) NOTICE
NORITA CAMACHO,) OF
Minor Child,) HEARING
By:)
GEORGE N. CAMACHO)
and SUSANA B.)
QUITANO,)
Petitioner.)

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on August 4, 2009, at 9:00 A.m. in Courtroom 205, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 10th day of July, 2009.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

Ngirur Okamura
P.O. Box 5084 CHRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No. 256-0649 (h)

pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The) FCD GU

Petition To Appoint) Civil Action

General Guardianship) No. 09-0287

For:)

KIA NA ILLEBRANG) NOTICE

OKAMURA,) OF

Minor Child,) HEARING

By:)

NGIRUR OKAMURA,)
Petitioner.)

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on August 3, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 27th day of May, 2009

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

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NFL looks into allegations against Roethlisberger



RENO, Nev. (AP)—In the last year, Ben Roethlisberger led the Pittsburgh Steelers to a Super Bowl title and solidified his legacy as one of the game's great big-game quarterbacks.

But it's what happened at a celebrity golf tournament in Lake Tahoe in the summer of 2008 that is the big talk around Steelers camp as the quarterback gets ready to defend the team's championship.

A woman has filed a bombshell lawsuit saying Roethlisberger raped her in a hotel penthouse a year ago, a claim he vehemently denies. The woman never went to the authorities with her story, and it's unclear why she decided to file the lawsuit seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars a full year later.

"Ben has never sexually assaulted anyone. The timing of the lawsuit and the absence of a criminal complaint and a criminal investigation are the most compelling evidence of the absence of any criminal conduct," Roethlisberger lawyer David Cornwell said in a statement. "If an investigation is commenced, Ben will cooperate fully and Ben will be fully exonerated."

He did not immediately reply to a phone message and e-mail seeking more comment.

The stunning allegations served as a major distraction for Roethlisberger as the Steelers get ready to report to camp next week. The Steelers and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said they were looking into the allegations against Roethlisberger, who has won two Super Bowls in his five-year career and is one of the big-

gest names in sports.

"I don't know enough of the details, but it's a civil lawsuit. It's something that we obviously will look into," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said Tuesday when asked about it in New York during an unrelated news conference. "I've been in touch with the Steelers about it."

Steelers spokesman Dave Lockett said the team was aware of the lawsuit, and "we are gathering information."

Lockett confirmed that Roethlisberger had canceled a news conference scheduled for Thursday to promote Shaquille O'Neal's new TV series that debuts Aug. 8 on ABC. Roethlisberger is one of the top athletes the NBA All-Star center intends to challenge in a series of skills tests in their respective sports.

The lawsuit seeks a minimum of \$440,000 in damages from the quarterback, at least \$50,000 in damages from the Harrah's officials and an unspecified amount of punitive damages "sufficient to deter" Roethlisberger and the others "from

Pittsburgh
Steelers
quarter-
back Ben

Roethlisberger
celebrates the team's
27-23 win over the
Arizona Cardinals in
the NFL Super Bowl
XLIII football game,
Sunday, Feb. 1, 2009,
in Tampa, Fla.

AP



engaging in such conduct in the future." The suit alleges hotel officials for Harrah's Lake Tahoe tried to cover up the incident.

The woman's lawsuit says she didn't file a criminal complaint because she feared Harrah's would side with Roethlisberger and she would be fired.

The woman was working as an executive casino host last July when she said Roethlisberger struck up a friendly conversation at her desk during the golf tournament.

The next night, she said he telephoned her to tell her his television sound system wasn't working and asked her to look at it. She said she was unable to

find a technician so she handled it herself because she had been told it was important to please the celebrities.

In Roethlisberger's room she said she determined the TV was functioning properly but as she turned to leave, the 6-foot-5, 240-pound quarterback blocked her exit, the suit claims.

The lawsuit said he grabbed her and started to kiss her. It said she was "shocked and stunned that this previously friendly man, that appeared to be a gentleman in her previous contacts with him was suddenly preventing her from leaving, was assaulting her and battering her."

She said she feared that because he was a football player he could or would physically harm her if she tried to fight him off, but that she objected and protested several times.

"But instead of stopping, Roethlisberger began fondling plaintiff through her dress and between her legs," the suit said. He then "held her against her will and physically moved plaintiff and pushed her onto his bed" where he raped her, the suit says.

She told him, "You don't want to do this," and begged him "I am not on any type of birth control."

Afterward, he asked if there was a security camera in the hallway. She said he then instructed her to claim she had repaired his

television if anyone asked why she was in his room.

The lawsuit says the woman required hospitalization for treatment for depression after the alleged attack.

Efforts to reach the woman Tuesday were unsuccessful.

The woman's lawyer, Calvin R. Dunlap, declined to answer questions about the lack of a criminal complaint and why the civil action was brought a year after the incident allegedly took place.

"Neither I nor our client will be making any comment," Dunlap said in an e-mail. "We believe the matter should be resolved in court rather than in the media."

Teresa Duffy, a spokeswoman for the sheriff's office in Douglas County, which includes part of Lake Tahoe, said no complaints were filed about such an incident either with sheriff's deputies or the district attorney's office.

The lawsuit also names eight Harrah's employees as defendants and alleges the cover-up involved the chief of security at Harrah's Lake Tahoe and was carried out with the knowledge of John Koster, president of Harrah's northern Nevada operations.

John Packer, spokesman for the hotel-casino, did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

Harrah's Entertainment, the hotel-casino's parent company, declined comment.

"We don't comment on pending legal matters," Jacqueline Peterson said from company headquarters in Las Vegas.

Last week Roethlisberger played in the 20th annual American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament at Lake Tahoe, fin-

**Goodell remains
mum on when
he'll decide on
Michael Vick**

NEW YORK (AP)—NFL commissioner Roger Goodell isn't revealing when he'll decide whether to reinstate Michael Vick now that the former Atlanta Falcons star quarterback has been released from federal custody.

"The process is ongoing, and I hope to make a decision sometime in the near future," Goodell said Tuesday, a day after Vick's home confinement ended.

He wouldn't define what "near future" means.

Vick served 23 months on a dogfighting conviction.

NFL training camps open for veterans next week. Goodell would not say when he'll meet with Vick.

"We're not going to give any details right now," he said after a news conference announcing singer Marc Anthony's involvement with the NFL.

The commissioner has said he wants to see remorse and evidence of change from the player he suspended indefinitely.

Even if Goodell reinstates Vick, the 29-year-old quarterback would still have to find a team willing to sign him.

ishing tied for 30th in the field of 89 golfers. It was not immediately known if he stayed at Harrah's.

from 14th and trails Contador by 7:23.

The course ended with a 19-mile downhill run, and the final descent was perilous: Jens Voigt of Germany crashed either from a bicycle malfunction or a bump in the road. The Tour's medical staff said he severely bruised his face and right elbow and was flown by helicopter to a hospital in the French city of Grenoble.

"He lost consciousness for a while, but he should be OK," CSC team manager Bjarne Riis said. "For me, it's a good sign."

During the stage, Astana said one of its vehicles was stopped and searched by customs officials at the Swiss-French border, adding nothing of concern was found.

Pope Benedict XVI sent greetings to riders and organizers as the pack passed close to the Alpine retreat of Les Combles, overlooking Mont Blanc, where the pontiff is staying.

Wednesday's stage features what some riders fear is the toughest Alpine route this year—a 105-mile ride from Bourg-Saint-Maurice to Le Grand-Bornand marked by five tough climbs and another downhill finish.

Armstrong to step up if Contador has bad Tour day



BOURG-SAINTE-MARIE, France

(AP)—Lance Armstrong mustered one of his strongest showings yet at this Tour de France on Tuesday, a dazzling burst of acceleration from yesteryear that allowed him to keep second place.

The seven-time champion was so buoyed by the performance that he suggested to The Associated Press he could still contend for the yellow jersey if teammate and race leader Alberto Contador has a "bad day."

Armstrong, speaking after the 16th stage in the Alps, stressed he doesn't expect that to happen and only a "big shake-up" would allow for such a scenario.

Contador, the 2007 Tour winner, had to fight to retain the overall lead in the 99-mile stage from the Swiss town of Martigny to Bourg-Saint-Maurice, France, which was won by Mikel Astarloza of Spain.

As Contador tried to keep pace with two attackers on the final climb, the 37-year-old

Texan lagged. But after dropping back at least 35 seconds, he popped out of his saddle and recovered lost ground.

"I had no choice.... So I waited until we had a steeper section and then I got away with an acceleration," he said.

Contador was impressed, but not surprised.

"It's easy to explain—he's a very great rider," said Contador, who leads his Astana teammate by 1:37. "He was in the past, and he showed it once again."

Contador and Armstrong finished in a small group of race leaders behind Astarloza. The route featured the highest peak this year, the snowcapped Grand-Saint-Bernard pass on the Swiss-Italian border, at 8,113 feet, and its sister the Petit-Saint-Bernard pass, on the Italian-French border.

Armstrong says he's feeling better on his bike than he did during Sunday's entree into the Alps, when Contador dusted him and the entire pack on the ride up to the Swiss ski station of Verbier.

"I made some changes to my

position yesterday—I raised the seat height," he said. "So in general, I was pedaling better today."

Armstrong, back at the Tour after 3 1/2 years of retirement, committed himself to help Contador win the three-week race after the Spaniard took the yellow jersey that day. Armstrong appeared to shut down his own ambitions then. But at cycling's main event—which ends Sunday in Paris—anything can happen.

"If there was a massive shake-up and something happened, then I'd have to be strong—to represent the interests of the team," Armstrong said. "But I don't think that's going to happen."

"If he were to have a bad day, I think I could cover the moves for the team," he added. "But I don't think he's going to have a bad day."

In the interview, Armstrong was coy about competing next year, saying only: "There's a pretty good chance I'll be there."

But in an e-mail to the AP later in the day, Armstrong's manager Mark Higgins said the Texan will "for sure" be part of the race next year.

Asked whether he plans to announce a new team, as has been widely speculated, Armstrong told the AP: "Come on, man, you're killing me... let's talk about music or something."

On his Twitter account Tuesday, he wrote that his team has a new American sponsor for next year, but he wouldn't provide details until Thursday.

Armstrong already has shown his guile and guts at this Tour. He eclipsed Contador in the standings in Stage 3, by cleverly catching a ride in a wind-swept lead group. In the opening day time trial, he was 10th—40 seconds behind Swiss winner Fabian Cancellara—and only 22 seconds slower than Contador.

But the Spaniard clearly has been the strongest man in the mountains. He outpaced Armstrong in both uphill finishes this year—in Andorra, in the seventh stage, and in Verbier.

Contador had a struggle on his hands in fending off brothers Andy and Frank Schleck of Luxembourg on the Petit-Saint-Bernard, the second of the day's climbs.

Contador had a struggle on

"I gave my maximum," he said. "I could resist but not without difficulty. I'm happy after this difficult day."

Astarloza, who rides for the Euskadi Euskaltel team, thrust his fists in the air and kissed his fingers as he crossed the line in 4 hours, 14 minutes, 20 seconds. He was six seconds ahead of French riders Sandy Casar and Pierrick Fedrigo.

With a little more than a mile to go, the Spaniard escaped three other breakaway riders with him and held on for his first stage win on the Tour.

"This is the biggest day of my career," Astarloza said.

Contador, Armstrong, fourth-placed teammate Andreas Kloeden and third-placed Bradley Wiggins of Britain all finished 59 seconds after Astarloza.

Overall, Contador leads Wiggins, of the U.S. team Garmin, by 1:46. Kloeden is 2:17 back, and Andy Schleck of Saxo Bank is fifth, trailing by 2:26.

Two-time Tour runner-up Cadel Evans of Australia, who finished 3:55 back, was one of the big losers. He fell to 17th

Yanks' Mitre gets first win since 2007



NEW
YORK
(AP)—
Pitcher

Sergio Mitre earned his first win in two years and Robinson Cano hit a two-run homer as the New York Yankees beat the Baltimore Orioles 6-4 for its fifth straight American League victory on Tuesday.

Alex Rodriguez had a key two-run single for the Yankees, who had just six hits. The Yankees are a major league-best 43-22 since Rodriguez came off the disabled list May 8 following hip surgery.

Twins 3, Athletics 2

At Oakland, California, Michael Cuddyer hit a go-ahead triple in the 10th inning as Minnesota beat Oakland.

Cuddyer's two-out triple off All-Star closer Andrew Bailey (4-3) scored Joe Mauer, who singled with one out.

Rangers 4, Red Sox 2

At Arlington, Texas, rookie Tommy Hunter pitched six solid innings to beat Josh Beckett as Texas knocked Boston out of first place in the AL East.

The Red Sox have lost four straight for the first time since last July, scoring only eight runs in the stretch.

Tigers 9, Mariners 7

At Detroit, Magglio Ordonez hit a grand slam in a five-run first inning as Detroit held on for a win over Seattle.

The Tigers scored five runs while being swept in a three-game series at Yankee Stadium last weekend, but matched that total before making their first out against Seattle.



New York Yankees' Sergio Mitre delivers a pitch during the first inning of a baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles on Tuesday, July 21, 2009, at Yankee Stadium in New York. (AP)

Indians 2, Blue Jays 1

At Toronto, Victor Martinez hit a two-run double in the ninth inning and Cliff Lee pitched his second straight complete game as Cleveland beat Toronto to snap a four-game losing streak.

Cleveland trailed heading into

the ninth against Blue Jays closer Scott Downs but took the lead thanks to a rare Toronto error.

Rays 3, White Sox 2

At Chicago, Carlos Pena hit a fly ball off Bobby Jenks to Tampa Bay's two-run ninth inning in a

win over Chicago.

The Rays had the bases loaded with no outs against Jenks (2-3) when Pat Burrell walked to force in Jason Bartlett with the tying run. Pena drove in Evan Longoria with a sacrifice fly to right, making it 3-2 and

Rockets center Yao undergoes foot surgery



HOUSTON (AP)—Rockets center Yao Ming had surgery Tuesday to repair a broken bone in his left foot.

The team announced the surgery was performed at Memorial Hermann Hospital by Dr. Tom Clanton, the Rockets' team physician, along with Dr. Bill McGarvey.

Surgeons grafted bone onto the tarsal navicular bone and realigned his foot to reduce stress on the repair. The seven-time All-Star is slated to remain in the hospital for several days.

"Everything went according to play, and we were able to achieve not only fixation of the broken bone but also realignment of the bones to improve the stress pattern on his foot," Dr. Clanton said in the statement. "We expect him to be immobilized in a cast and using crutches for at least 6-8 weeks."

Yao is expected to miss the 2009-10 season, but be ready to go for training camp in 2010.

Yao suffered the hairline fracture late in a May 8 playoff game



In this May 8, 2009, file photo, Houston Rockets center Yao Ming (11), of China, sits on the bench during the fourth quarter of Game 3 of a second-round Western Conference NBA playoff basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers in Houston. (AP)

against the Los Angeles Lakers. The Rockets said late last month that the injury had not healed and he was out indefinitely. Last Friday, the 7-foot-6 center announced that he'd have the surgery.

The injury had raised questions, especially in his native China, about Yao's playing future. But on July 8, he said through his agent that he was "optimistic about the future and I will return to playing basketball when my foot has fully healed."

Yao played in 77 regular-season games in 2008-09, his most injury-free year since 2004-05, when he played in 80. Before last season, Yao missed chunks of the previous three seasons with leg and foot injuries.

In 2006-07, Yao missed 32 games after breaking his right leg. He sustained a stress fracture in his left foot in 2007-08, underwent surgery and sat out 26 games.

Yao is due to make more than \$16 million next season, with a player option for 2010-11 that would pay him more than \$17 million.

He has averaged 19.1 points and 9.3 rebounds in his career.

sending the Rays to their fourth win in five games.

Angels 10, Royals 2, 2nd game

Angels 8, Royals 5, 1st game

At Kansas City, Missouri, Erick Aybar broke open a close second game with a three-run triple and had seven hits in Los Angeles's doubleheader sweep over Kansas City.

Aybar had three hits, three runs and an RBI in the opener. In the second game, he finished a homer short of the cycle after his bases-loaded triple off Juan Cruz started the Angels' seven-run seventh inning.

Phillies 4, Cubs 1

At Philadelphia, Jayson Werth hit a three-run homer with two outs in the 13th inning to send the Philadelphia Phillies to their 10th straight victory over the Chicago Cubs.

The NL East-leading Phillies are on their longest winning streak in 18 years. They won 13 straight from July 30 to Aug. 12, 1991.

Dodgers 12, Reds 3

At Los Angeles, Rafael Furcal hit a two-run homer and drove in four runs, and Matt Kemp added a two-run shot as Los Angeles got its 11th consecutive home victory over Cincinnati.

Manny Ramirez was hit on the side of his left hand by a pitch from Homer Bailey leading off the third inning. He went to a hospital for precautionary X-rays, which were negative. He is listed as day to day.

Marlins 3, Padres 2

At San Diego, Chris Volstad

pitched seven strong innings to lead Florida past San Diego.

The Padres had only five singles until rookie Kyle Blanks hit Leo Nunez's first pitch of the ninth inning for his first major league homer.

Hanley Ramirez had three of Florida's 12 hits.

Astros 11, Cardinals 6

At Houston, Carlos Lee's grand slam was one of Houston's three homers.

The Astros led 5-1 before Lee's shot in the seventh inning. It was his second grand slam of the season and his second straight day with a home run.

Geoff Blum followed Lee's home run with his own to push Houston's lead to 10-1.

Braves 8, Giants 1

At Atlanta, Martin Prado had three hits and scored three runs, and Brian McCann hit a three-run homer and drove in four runs as Atlanta beat San Francisco.

The Braves have averaged 7.2 runs in a 5-1 start to their eight-game homestand and are 9-3 in their last 12 games overall.

Brewers 2, Pirates 0

At Pittsburgh, Braden Looper allowed four hits over seven innings and Prince Fielder had two two-out RBI singles for Milwaukee.

Last-place Pittsburgh, which snapped a 17-game losing streak to the Brewers on Monday, was shut out for the ninth time this season.

Nationals 4, Mets 0

At Washington, John Lannan threw his first career shutout, scattering seven hits for Washington.

Lannan (7-7) stuck out one, getting 17 groundball outs. He did not give up an extra-base hit and only once allowed a runner to reach second base, when he gave up two singles in the third.

NBA BRIEFS

Kings reach agreement with free agent Sean May

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Free-agent forward Sean May has agreed to a one-year contract with the Sacramento Kings. The Kings announced the deal Tuesday. May became a free agent when Charlotte declined to make him a one-year qualifying offer of \$3.7 million last month. May was drafted as the 13th pick in 2005 but has been limited because of a knee injury and conditioning. His best season came in 2006-07, when he averaged 11.9 points and 6.7 rebounds. He played only 35 games that season because of knee pain that led to surgery. May missed all of the 2007-08 season recovering from the operation and played just 24 games last season, averaging 3.9 points and 2.9 rebounds.

76ers sign 1st-round pick Holiday

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The Philadelphia 76ers have signed first-round draft pick, guard Jrue Holiday. Holiday, 6-foot-3, 180 pounds, was the 17th overall pick in the draft and was an early-entry candidate out of UCLA following his freshman season. He averaged 8.5 points, 3.8 rebounds and 3.7 assists in his only season with the Bruins. Holiday should expect to see instant playing time with the Sixers unlikely to re-sign starting point guard Andre Miller. Miller is an unrestricted free agent.

Former Grizzlies point guard critically wounded

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Former Memphis Grizzlies and University of Memphis point guard Antonio Burks remains in critical condition a day after being shot during a robbery. A spokeswoman for Regional Medical Center in Memphis said Tuesday morning there was no change in the medical condition of Burks, who underwent surgery Monday night after he was shot in the lower torso. Police said the 29-year-old was returned to the operating room about 10 p.m. Monday because of internal bleeding. A police news release said Burks and four other men were in the backyard of a Memphis house when they were robbed by three men. They shot Burks and a 44-year-old man, whose identity was not released. Police said the second victim also was in critical condition.

Junior golfer tops RGA July Ace qualifier

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Junior golfer Jay Choi holds the score to beat in the Refaluw-asch Golf Association July Ace of the Month Tournament after recording the best performance in the RGA qualifier last Sunday at the Coral Ocean Point.

Choi shot net 66 at the Agingan Point-based course, three strokes behind Ray Tigilau, who fired a net 63. However, the 20-handicapper Tigilau, who carded

ed a 41 and 43 on the front and back nines, respectively, had already won the April Ace and thus was disqualified to set the score to beat for the July Ace.

Tigilau claimed the April Ace after setting a season-best of net 61, also at COP.

In Tigilau's place was runner-up Choi, who was consistent with his game despite the soggy condition of the fairways at COP. The 17-year-old and 14-handicapper golfer had a 41 on the front and improved his performance on the back with his 39 for the day's best gross score of 80.

Completing the Top 3 finish in last Sunday's July Ace qualifier was the 8-handicapper Tars Olopai, who tallied a net 73 after shooting a 40 and 41 on the front and back nines, respectively.

Ten other RGA members joined the qualifier, namely Joe Saurez (net 82), Jess Wabol (80), Asterio Tawanpiy (74), Tony Rogolifoi (79), Thomson Palik (76), Jordon Kossam (79), Manny Mangarero (75), Tom Tebuteb (76), Sonny Flores (79), and Joe Wabol (76).

Jess Wabol and Kossam won the closest to the pin contests

on hole Nos. 7 and 14, respectively.

Meanwhile, Jess Wabol is reminding RGA members who wish to win the July Ace title to compete in the 2009 Tournament of Champions next month.

Wabol, who is RGA's tournament director, said they will hold the RGA July Ace tournament in conjunction with the two-day TOC. Only the scores made on the east course will be counted for the July Ace tournament.

For more information about RGA tournaments, contact Kossam at 483-4506 or Wabol at 288-1129.

Pacquiao 2-1 pick against Cotto

BOXING He may be the smaller and lighter fighter, but Manny Pacquiao will still be the bettors' choice when he tangles with Miguel Cotto on Nov. 14 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Just a day after the bout was sealed at a catch weight of 145 pounds, Skybet.com listed the pound-for-pound king Pacquiao as an early 2-1 favorite to wrest Cotto's World Boxing Organization welterweight crown.

Never mind that Pacquiao will be waging war at over 140 lb for only the second time in his sterling career and that Cotto, a natural at 147 lb, has beaten the likes of Shane Mosley and Zab Judah.



At his heaviest, Pacquiao tipped the scales at 148 lb against Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton, while Cotto nor-

MBI

From Page 28

points and was scoreless in the fourth period.

"We were able to neutralize Mike. Don [Sese] and Ryan [Cabrera] are our two players who can run against Mike, so their role was to guard him and challenge every shot. Other MBI players, mostly our big men, were instructed to stay in the paint. Before in the regular season, these big players are sometimes in the backcourt going for steals and it was not a wise thing to do," Barja said.

Barja was often heard shouting at either Art Trajano or Al-

vin Alvarez to buckle down on defense and there were instances when he even screamed at them and said "you are napping on defense." Some players may feel ridiculed when they are shouted at in front of the crowd, but not MBI defenders.

"The good thing about our players is they listened. They do whatever they were told to do. They stuck to their roles," Barja added.

Barja's intense defensive instruction even challenged Trajano to assert his might inside, as the MBI center swatted away shots after shots and intimidated Advance players. Trajano had 16 blocks in the two games in the finals.

Multiple offensive options

Offensively, Barja said they relied on Nonato and Trajano in the first two games of the playoffs and in Game 1 of the finals. However in Game 2, they shifted their focus and leaned on Sese and Cabrera.

"When we saw that Ritual [Rocyl] was guarding R.J. [Nonato] and they were double teaming Art [Trajano], I told Sese and Cabrera to go for their shots if they have the opportunity, and fortunately our decoy worked," Barja said.

Cabrera fired 23 points, while Sese nailed 22 and ironically, they outran Olaiti-

man and company in fastbreak plays. Alvarez also entered the scoring picture, notching 15 markers.

"We have almost everything falling into right places at the right time. Our defense worked, our offense came in a handy, the players' chemistry was there, and everybody knew how they can help the team," Barja said.

"We had a bad start and it was okay, as expectations on the team were not that high. However, as the season ended, we exceeded beyond expectations and it feels great to pull this one off and make a sort of history in this league," the MBI coach added.

significant improvement in the last nine holes with his 39 for a gross 85.

Babauta a 7-handicapper, was nearly consistent on the west course with his 39 and 38 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 77.

SGA's tournament last Sunday also featured longest drive and closest to the pin competitions.

Roxas and Babauta won the longest drive contests on par-4 hole Nos. 1 and 15, respectively. Closest to the pin winners on par-3 holes were Demapan on No. 3, Steve Balakrishna on No. 5, newcomer Jayson John on No. 13, and Babauta on No. 17.

BIRDIE

From Page 28

four birdies made by Manibusan, who won the monthly tournament after carding a net 68 on the west course of the Laolao Bay Golf Resort. The former Superior Court presiding judge shot the lowest gross score of the day after taming the Kagman course with his 2-under par 34 on the front and 1-over par 37 on the back for a 1-under par 71 total.

Subtracting his 3 handicap, Manibusan ended with a net 68, tying SGA new member Pete Roxas of Guam.

The new Saipan resident and 18-handicapper had a decent debut in SGA with his 38 and 48 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 86. However, Roxas failed to barge into the SGA club championships as he bogeyed the par-4, 1-handicap, and playoff hole No. 8.

The SGA Ace of the Aces will be held at the end of the year and only monthly Ace winners are allowed to compete in the yearend tournament and hoist the perpetual trophy. Manibusan had his hand on the coveted trophy in 2006, but failed to defend it in 2007 when Larry Deleon Guerrero ruled the club

championships. The former judge returned to the SGA Ace of the Aces Tournament last year after winning the June Ace title, but Joe Demapan took the 2008 title.

Twenty SGA members com-

peted for the July Ace plum with Ray Dela Cruz completing the Top 3.

Actually, Dela Cruz tied Juan L. Babauta for third with their identical net scores of 70. How-

ever, Dela Cruz won the tie-break, as he saved par in the No. 8 playoff hole against Babauta's bogey.

The 15-handicapper Dela

Cruz started slow with his 46 in the first nine holes, but made

CNMI SWIMMERS

From Page 28

World Championships in Melbourne, Australia, and Staal are swimming in the 50m breaststroke on Tuesday, while Shin Kimura and Graf are racing in the 800m freestyle relay.

Staal will be alone in the Foro Italico pools next Saturday, as he will participate in the 50m backstroke.

The CNMI bets will complete their World Championships next Sunday via the 4x100m medley relay.

Competing in relay events in the World Championships is a first for the Commonwealth and coach Hiro Kimura is hoping the CNMI bets will eclipse the records they made in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Games early this year.

CNMI

From Page 28

Aug. 4 to 8.

However, coach Elias Rangamar said the 12 selected CNMI athletes will only be competing in the Oceania Regional Championships 2009.

"We have athletes who could have qualified in the Grand Prix, as we could have nominated Yvonne [Bennett] and Tyrone [Omar], but they are very busy with schools. Also, their training is focused more on the regionals," Rangamar said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* last Tuesday.

Had Omar been nominated to the Grand Prix, it could be his second time to compete in the biennial meet that features the track and field stars of powerhouse Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and New Caledonia.

Omar was with Dexter Dillay in the 2007 edition of the Grand Prix held in Cairns.

Omar qualified in the B finals of the men's 100m run and finished sixth in the fastest heat in the 100m run after timing in at 11.29 seconds.

Dillay was third in the javelin throw with a distance of 45.37m

and recorded 5.87m in the long jump to end up in sixth place overall.

Omar is expected to participate in sprint races in this year's regionals. Joining him on the team are sisters Yvonne and Yvette Bennett, Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel, Jacque Wonenberg, Clayton Kenty, Jesus Iguel, Douglas Dillay, Lia Rangamar, Trevor Ogunmor, Matt Mancao, and Ryan Ichihara.

Rangamar will be accompanying the CNMI athletes to Land Down Under and they will leave Saipan on Aug. 1 and will return on Aug. 10.

"We will go to Guam first, stayed there for a couple of hours, then go to Brisbane before heading to Queensland. It will be a long flight, so we are leaving early to give our athletes a day or two of rest and prepare for their events," Rangamar said.

The regionals, which is a first for the Oceania Athletics Association and is part of the zone's cost-cutting measures, is a consolidation of the regional athletics championships in Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia.

However, results will be compiled by regions to determine the rankings of athletes in each of the three divisions in the zone.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	56	37	.602	—
Boston	55	38	.591	1
Tampa Bay	52	42	.553	4 1/2
Toronto	46	48	.489	10 1/2
Baltimore	41	52	.441	15

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	49	42	.538	—
Chicago	48	45	.516	2
Minnesota	48	46	.511	2
Kansas City	37	56	.398	13
Cleveland	37	57	.394	13 1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	60	34	.638	—
Colorado	51	43	.543	9
San Francisco	50	43	.538	9 1/2
Arizona	40	54	.426	20
San Diego	37	57	.394	23

Yesterday's Games

Philadelphia 4, Chicago Cubs 1, 13 innnings
Milwaukee 2, Pittsburgh 0
Washington 4, N.Y. Mets 0
Atlanta 8, San Francisco 1
Houston 11, St. Louis 6
Arizona 6, Colorado 5
Florida 3, San Diego 2
L.A. Dodgers 12, Cincinnati 3
L.A. Angels 8, Kansas City 5, 1st game
L.A. Angels 10, Kansas City 2, 2nd game
N.Y. Yankees 6, Baltimore 4
Detroit 9, Seattle 7
Cleveland 2, Toronto 1
Texas 4, Boston 2
Tampa Bay 3, Chicago White Sox 2
Minnesota 3, Oakland 2, 10 innnings

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2009 Budweiser Cup/Seda Special Awards

Photos by
ROSELYN B. MONROYO



The MVP awardees in various divisions pose for a group photo.



The Oleai Shooters are also the Budweiser Cup champions in the Thursday B Flame Tree division.



The Bwiibwiis Mermaids show their Budweiser Cup trophies during the awards ceremony for the Saipan Electronic Darts Association Winter/Spring 2009 League last Sunday at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.



The Oleai Black Stallion Juniors made it two in a row, as they also took the Budweiser Cup in the Tuesday B division.



D'Pirates M-Destroyers also won in the Masters division of the Budweiser Cup.



The high-in and hi-out awardees celebrate at the stage.



After placing third in the SEDA league, the VFW Major Leaks redeemed themselves in the Budweiser Cup after ruling the A division.



The Bwiibwiis Meta Mwa pose with their Budweiser Cup C division trophies.



The VFW Duty Guns are all smiles as they receive their Budweiser Cup trophies in the Thursday B Fanihi division.



Junior golfer tops RGA July Ace qualifier

Junior golfer Jay Choi holds the score to beat in the Refaluwasch Golf Association July Ace of the Month Tournament after recording the best performance in the RGA qualifier last Sunday at the Coral Ocean Point.

26

Saipan Tribune

Sports

NFL looks into allegations against Roethlisberger

In the last year, Ben Roethlisberger led the Pittsburgh Steelers to a Super Bowl title and solidified his legacy as one of the game's great big-game quarterbacks.

24



28 THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2009

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CNMI swimmers head to World Champs



Graf

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Swimming Team left for Rome, Italy early yesterday morning to represent the Commonwealth in the 13th FINA World Championships. World Championships returnees Rezne Wong and Cooper Graf are leading the CNMI Team



Staal

and will be joined by first-timers Kai Staal and Shin Kimura. Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan coach Hiro Kimura and Saipan Swim Club coach Mike Villagomez accompanied the four swimmers in Rome with the former joining the trip as a representative of the Northern Marianas Swimming Federation.

The World Championships have already start-



Kimura

ed last Saturday with the staging of qualifying events for diving, synchronized swimming, and open water swim and action in Foro Italico and Ostia is expected to heat up this weekend, as world-class swimmers compete in individual pool events.

The CNMI bets will start plunging into the pools in Foro Italico this Sunday, as they com-



Wong

pete in the 400m freestyle (Shin Kimura), 50m butterfly (Graf and Staal), 100m breaststroke (Wong), and 4x400m freestyle relay.

The Commonwealth's swimmers will take a day off from competition on Monday, but will have a training session in the morning before participating in two more events on Tuesday.

Wong, who was with Graf during the 2007

See CNMI SWIMMERS on Page 26

MBI figures out championship puzzle

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Winning the championship in the 2009 Inaugural Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League is like a puzzle solved for Micronesian Brokers, Inc. as it found the right pieces in time to complete a Cinderella finish in the six-team caging.

"At the start of the league, we had this bunch of guys who had no clue how each other plays. Some have never played organized basketball for several years. They have no stamina, chemistry, and teamwork, and don't know how they will be able to fare against the rest of the field," MBI coach Kitz Barja said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* last Tuesday.

The struggling lineup, which included Art Trajano, Don Sese, Jeff Garcia, George Barbo, Alvin Alvarez, Aries Cordero, Ryan Cabrera, Marvin Achas, Andrew Prado, and Brian Blas, gave MBI a so-so performance in the two-round robin regular season.

Despite the arrival of new recruit R.J. Nonato in the second round, MBI won only three games and lost seven in the regular season. It could have finished second to the last in the team standings had not been for its two wins against Shirley's. The host and MBI tied with identical 3-7 records, but the latter won



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
MBI's Ryan Cabrera is seen here going for one of the numerous layups he made during their series-clincher Game 2 win over Advance in the Shirley's caging finals last Monday night at the JP Center Basketball Court.

in the tiebreak and was seeded fourth in the playoffs.

"The regular season was really tough for the team. We had numerous turnovers, we were killed in fastbreak, we let our foes play their game, and the players don't know their roles on the team," Barja said.

"Almost everything worked against us in the regular season. However, it was a blessing in disguise, as after seeing our weaknesses, we sat down, talked about how these hurt us, and what should we do to make things work for us in the playoffs," the MBI mentor said.

Barja said the first thing they discussed was to slow down the pace of the game, as they do not have the fresh legs and air to match up against running teams.

"G4S loves to run and Advance is probably the fastest team in the league with Mike Olaitiman on it side. If we slow down the game, we will take away their fastbreak points," Barja said.

MBI went on to stun pennant champion G4S in the semifinals, 66-59, and then swept the Olaitiman-led Advance in the title series. MBI wrapped up the series with a methodical 87-70 win in Game 2.

Know your role and stick to it

Game 2 saw Olaitiman struggle on offense, as finished with only 12

See MBI on Page 26

CNMI tracksters focusing more on regional meet



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Sisters Yvette, left, and Yvonne Bennett, perform a running drill during their training session last Tuesday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility.

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The CNMI will miss this year's OAA Grand Prix Series in Australia, as the Common-

wealth's tracksters are concentrating more on the Oceania Regional Championships 2009.

The Grand Prix will be held in conjunction with the Oceania regionals in Griffith University, Gold Coast, Queensland, from

See CNMI on Page 26

Birdie saves Manibusan July Ace



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A birdie on a playoff hole handed Ed Manibusan the Saipan Golfers Association July Ace of the Month title last Sunday.

The birdie on hole No. 8 was one of the

See BIRDIE on Page 26